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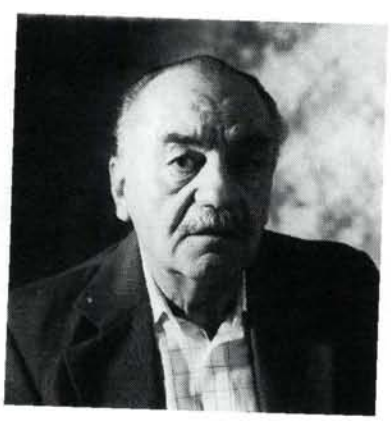

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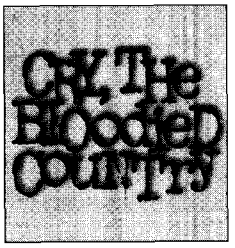

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 210, Number 18, Issue 4,137, May 2, 1994. (Printed in the U.S. on April 13, 1994.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 10 & 17, July 18 & 25, Aug. 22 & 29, and Sept. 19 & 26, 1994) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1994 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: editors@tnr.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

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CORRESPONDENCE

By any other name

To the editors:

Nothing in L.J. Davis's repackaged versions of old, disproven theories and sensationalized summations about life and business in Arkansas ("The Name of Rose," April 4) concerns me more than his mischaracterizations of Worthen Bank's business transactions. Many of those mischaracterizations—such as the change in the usury law—have already been addressed in TNR ("An Arkansas Slugfest," April 25), but let me address a few more.

Yes, Worthen *did* lose, under former management, $52 million in a failed repurchase transaction in 1985. However, Worthen restored itself back to health without the use of any public funds. No taxpayer money was lost. No depositors' money was lost. No one from Worthen "appeared before the bar of justice," because Worthen committed no crimes and perpetrated no fraud. To the contrary, Worthen was a victim of a fraud, perpetrated by a New Jersey securities firm, the officers of which were prosecuted and convicted.

Yes, Worthen *did* make a $3.5 million loan to Bill Clinton's campaign committee. However, Davis failed to mention that the loan complied with all Federal Election Commission regulations, and that the loan is a standard campaign finance device that has been used in every presidential election since Ronald Reagan's bid in 1976.

On a separate matter, Davis distorted the facts regarding my involvement in Stephens Inc.'s 1978 sale of a minority interest in Financial General Bankshares (FGB) to investors representing the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI). He predicates his criticism of the transaction on the fact that the "comptroller of the currency (OCC) clearly stated that BCCI was never to enter the American banking system." He goes on to question why the OCC "order" did nothing to prevent these transactions. How could it? In 1981 the Federal Reserve Board conducted an inquiry that subsequently led to the approval of 100 percent ownership of FGB by the same investors.

Finally, Davis reports that a fire occurred at Worthen the day special prosecutor Robert Fiske arrived in Arkansas. Clearly, he is suggesting foul play. In fact, the fire occurred in tenant spaces, not in spaces occupied by Worthen. It has been investigated and determined by the authorities to have started accidentally. Moreover, Worthen's tenant, KPMG Peat Marwick, has announced that no client information was destroyed in the fire.

By the way, Davis misidentified me as Ray Bradbury (the name of a well-known science fiction writer). His slip would have made Freud proud, for indeed, his fantasy was nothing more than "an Arkansas thriller."

CURT BRADBURY
CEO, Worthen Banking Corporation
Little Rock, Arkansas

To the editors:

I confess to knowing little about the history of Arkansas politics, but as a former bar association president, I know something about the law. L.J. Davis is misleading when he writes, "Although Rodham Clinton was a litigator—that is, a lawyer whose task is to appear in court, if only to force the other side to settle ... she was almost never seen in the courtrooms of Little Rock." The way a litigator "forces the other side to settle" is by educating "the other side," at depositions and other pretrial proceedings (which are held in the office and never in the courtroom), about the weaknesses of the other side's case and the strengths of the litigator's case—a painful process for "the other side" if it is done right. As courtroom litigators frequently say, the good cases settle; the *drech* goes to trial.

JOHN M. GALLAGHER JR.
Media, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

At first I was inclined to be annoyed by L.J. Davis's article. But after thumbing back to Denis Collins's letter complaining about your Menendez parody (Correspondence, April 4), I realized I'd been had. This was obviously another of your subtle take-offs—in this case, a pitch-perfect simulation of *American Spectator*-style "journalism." Everything was there: the snide innuendoes, the half-baked or twisted facts, the crediting of disreputable sources, the apparent failure to seek comment from the targets of the piece and, of course, the breathy overtone, which insinuates that the reporter has come upon not merely a massive conspiracy but a unified field theory that explains everything. Brilliant work. Keep it up and you will soon be the premier humor magazine in the country.

ERIC SUMMERGRAD
Washington, D.C.

Not pouting

To the editors:

It was difficult to tell whether Jeffrey Rosen's "Overqualified" (April 4) was tongue-in-cheek. Regardless, his column was disappointing for two reasons—its inaccurate description of the Chicago Council of Lawyers's evaluation of the Seventh Circuit, and its substitution of hagiography for journalism.

The Council's report on the Seventh Circuit was the work of three dozen lawyers over the course of a year. We reviewed more than 1,000 opinions and interviewed more than 100 lawyers who practice before the court (not limited to our members). We did something that, to our knowledge, is unprecedented: we gave a detailed examination of an intermediate appellate court from the perspective of a cross-section of practicing lawyers. Rosen failed to mention the report's detailed critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the court, both in substantive areas and in procedures.

Rosen also made several errors in what he *did* mention. First, he presented the council's comment on the demeanor of Posner and Easterbrook as the major focus of our evaluations, when these comments were a very small portion of our evaluations of the judges—evaluations that largely focused on legal ability, fairness, integrity, judicial temperament, administrative skills, work ethic, communication skills and respect for the rule of law. Second, he viewed bad demeanor as trivial. Temperament, including demeanor, may seem insignificant to Rosen, but litigants who have their cases heard by a judge whose behavior is grossly intemperate would not view it as such a minor matter. Some of the most experienced lawyers in Chicago were not "pouting" when they criticized injudicious conduct by a judge.

Judging is not about brilliance alone. It is about wisdom as it is applied to concrete cases with real parties. Massive citation of a judge does not mean he is correct, let alone wise; it merely means he is different, provocative, productive and has a gift for writing well.

BARRY A. MILLER
Chicago, Illinois

Sinners

To the editors:

In his letter to the editors (April 4), Stuart Ross—a man with the most Scottish sounding name I have ever heard—points out that Sinn Fein received 25 percent of the nationalist vote, not 20 percent. Assuming this is correct and that roughly 33 percent of the population would prefer to be ruled by the government of the Republic of Ireland rather than the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the support for Sinn

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Fein (and presumably the so-called Irish Republican Army) would amount to approximately 25 percent of 33 percent, or 8.25 percent of the province's population. I can think of no other group attempting to subvert the democratic process by murdering their opponents that receives so much support from American citizens.

ALAN MURPHY
Keene, New Hampshire

Impregnated

To the editors:

I don't mind being called an "essentialist" (whatever that is) on matters Wagnerian by Richard Taruskin, but I do mind being compared to a Nazi, albeit "from the other camp" ("The Golden Age of Kitsch," March 21). I suppose I ought to be inured to the sort of personal abuse being elicited by *Wagner: Race and Revolution*—after all, Edward Said has denounced me as an "ayatollah of the arts"—but it really is a bit much to be put on the same level as the Nazi mentality.

Precisely why does Taruskin reject out of hand the possibility that Wagner's anti-Semitism might be inscribed into his musical works? Despite what Taruskin seems to be saying via his mangled quotations, Mahler was convinced that *Siegfried* was impregnated both musically and textually with anti-Semitism. And if I may descend to citing Taruskin himself, he asserts in his recent book that "Musorgsky was Russia's most conspicuously anti-Semitic composer.... Musorgsky put his [anti-Semitism] into his works." If it is that simple for Musorgsky, why isn't it simple for Wagner, too?

PAUL LAWRENCE ROSE
University Park, Pennsylvania

Children of Light

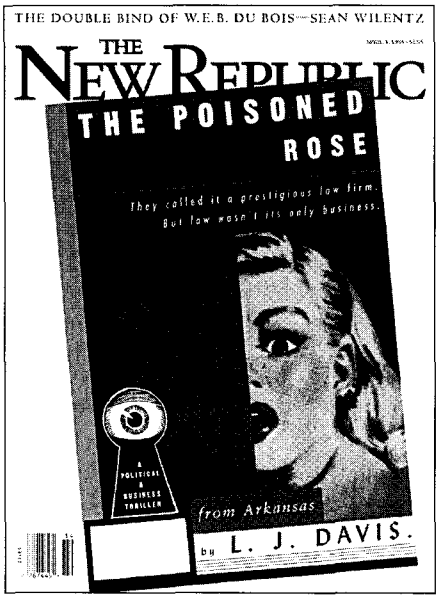
To the editors:

In "Desert Storm," her review of three books on the Dead Sea Scrolls (March 7), Paula Fredriksen says: "There seems to be little or no evidence of influence between the Essenes and Jesus in either direction." Half the statement is certainly true: the Essenes were not influenced by Jesus. Being extreme isolationists, they were quite impervious to the outside world. Of the 600 non-biblical scrolls, only three mention contemporaneous historical names.

We beg to differ with the other half of the statement. Jesus knew the Essenes and refers to them by their own appellation, "Children of Light." In the parable of the unjust steward, he says: "... for the children of this world in their generation are wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8).

In spite of the fact that Jesus regarded the Essenes as pious fools (he himself was undoubtedly a Pharisee), there is a high probability that he must have borrowed from their theology two elements central to his teaching. The first is the absolute ban on polygamy and divorce. This is a relatively new concept, never espoused by Normative Judaism, that was introduced by the Essenes. Some of the immigrants who came recently from Yemen to Israel still practice polygamy, and divorce is, and always was, widely practiced among Jews. The second element is regarding poverty as a virtue. "Blessed are the poor" is to be found both in the Scrolls and in the New Testament.

Normative Judaism claimed, if we may


THE DOUBLE BIND OF W.E.B. DU BOIS—SEAN WILENTZ
THE NEW REPUBLIC
THE POISONED ROSE
They called it a prestigious law firm. But law wasn't its only business.
A POLITICAL & BUSINESS THRILLER
from Arkansas
by L. J. DAVIS.

use Shalom Aleichem's phrase, that it isn't a shame to be poor, but it is neither something to be proud of. The fact that the Essenes were preaching these teachings at least a century before the ministry of Jesus allows us to regard it as a borrowing.

MAGEN BROSHI
Curator, Shrine of the Book
Israel Museum
Jerusalem, Israel

Just dü it

To the editors:

The writing in the Books & the Arts section of TNR is some of the most informative that I have ever read. However, there is a very serious deficiency in that half of the magazine. Let me explain. Recently I noticed, near the cash register of a local record store, a list of forthcoming releases by popular artists, including Hüsker Dü's C.D. of live recordings. I was shocked and excited. This is not just any album release, but a major event in American popular music. Hüsker Dü was the seminal post-punk band that defined "alternative" before it was known as such. Without question, Hüsker Dü is one of the most influential groups in the history of American popular music, though they never achieved commercial success. But if I depended on the back pages of TNR I would not know that Hüsker Dü even existed. In fact, it would be hard to know that American popular music exists at all.

Along with film (which TNR covers on a weekly basis), popular music is a facet of American culture that most human beings, American or not, are familiar with. It is a cultural force that has influenced politics, literature, theater, film, relationships, technology, business—that is, everything. So why doesn't TNR have regular articles about popular music? Why not have a weekly review of new and important releases, much like "Stanley Kauffmann on Films"?

My great fear is that TNR editors might take an elitist view of popular music: popular music is not serious art. Pop music rarely claims to be serious art (such claims usually have disastrous consequences). Yet pop music has made significant contributions to world culture. It also has made forgettable contributions—but what's the difference? The same thing happens in any other artistic field. Pop music just happens to appeal to more people.

ADAM MINTER
Wayzata, Minnesota

Overbearing

To the editors:

After reading Weston Kosova's "Disregarding Henry" and Hanna Rosin's "Shooting Blanks" (April 11), I couldn't help but wonder why you guys don't arrange for Henry Gonzalez and Jim Hubbard to spend some quality time together (say, at a TNR lunch). Assuming both their egos can fit through the doorway, everyone else ought to get a big kick out of watching two overbearing, megalomaniac control freaks vying to cast the bigger shadow.

ARI BLECH
Oceanside, New York

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TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

Hello, Hillary

Unless you've been in a coma for the past month, you may have heard a thing or two about Hillary Clinton's commodities trades. In less than a year during the late 1970s, as a rank amateur, while her husband was governor, she turned $1,000 into $100,000. It is perfectly reasonable to suspect that this was a sweetheart deal of some sort—though, so far, no one can figure out exactly what sort.

But unless you're a Whitewater obsessive, you may well have missed the story of Hillary's cellular phone deal. In just four years during the mid-1980s she turned a $2,000 investment in a cellular telephone franchise application into a $46,000 payoff. Not quite as spectacular, to be sure, but pretty impressive nevertheless, and more recent to boot. What's more, there is no mystery about the nature of this sweetheart deal. The profit derived from the fact that successful applicants were given a tremendously valuable franchise for free. And Hillary Clinton's ability to get in on this gravy train derived from the fact that she was a prominent lawyer, a woman and married to the governor.

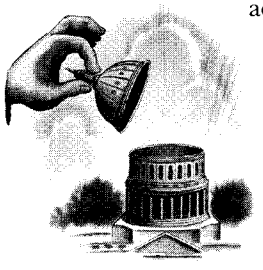
So why is there no fuss about Hillary's cellular deal (reported in the April 18 *Business Week*)?

One reason is that another investor in the deal was Sheffield Nelson, Bill Clinton's Republican arch-nemesis in Arkansas. That may explain why the story hasn't been taken up by the anti-Clinton agitprop machine (right-wing radio hosts, conservative editorial pages, national GOP politicians, etc.), which depends on Arkansas Clinton-haters for grist.

As for the mainstream press, this particular story has come out at a moment in Whitewater when the natural ebb-and-flow of every Washington scandal is in an ebbing phase. The feverish self-feeding momentum of a month ago has reversed itself. The press is in a "let's not get carried away" frame of mind (too late, too late).

What gets treated as a big story and what gets ignored can be comically arbitrary. Hillary's cellular investment was actually reported by Charles Babcock and Sharon LaFraniere in *The Washington Post* two years ago, as part of a long piece about the Clintons' finances. It made page 7. Nobody cared back then, either.

But the main reason no one is making a fuss about Hillary's cellular telephone profits is that all cellular franchises across the country were rewarded in more or less the same way. Hundreds of prominent people did exactly what Hillary Clinton did—openly, within the law and beyond reproach. Thus Hillary's cellular deal illustrates, once again, TRB's Law of Scandal: the scandal isn't what's illegal, the scandal is what's legal.



What makes this deal a nonstory as far as the press is concerned—the fact that it was perfectly legal and everybody does it—is precisely what makes it more important in the real world than one woman's luck or graft in commodities trading. The press needs a "bright line" of legal or ethical misbehavior, or at least possible misbehavior, to certify something as "news." But the inevitable reality that people will cross the line from time to time is less interesting than society's decision about where the line should be drawn. All line-crossing stories can be boiled down to three words: flesh is weak. That is a dog-bites-man story if there ever was one. Line-drawing stories tell you not about random individuals or about universal human nature but about the society we live in.

Hillary's cellular deal is a classic line-drawing story. At the time she was invited to join the investor group bidding on the Little Rock franchise, the Federal Communications Commission was planning to allocate these goodies the way it had allocated T.V. and radio licenses: through insane "comparative hearings," in which applicants would vie to prove their moral worthiness for receiving this gift. Being local, being a minority or a woman, and being highly regarded in the community were all pluses.

Later, the FCC switched to the only slightly less insane method of awarding these gifts by lottery. Hillary's group came in second, but the winning group's claim was threatened by a lawsuit and the winners unloaded the franchise to Hillary's group at a deep discount. Having secured the franchise, Hillary's group almost immediately flipped it at full value to McCaw Communications, the cellular giant, which actually built the system. That's how it usually works. The FCC puts almost no restrictions on resale of its cherished licenses once you have persuaded it that you, above all others, deserve to have one.

Peruse the annual Forbes 400 list of the richest Americans and you'll see that a remarkable number got there through the gift or growth in value of radio spectrum space handed out for free by the FCC. Many others got rich from cable franchises given away by local governments. The scandal isn't that anyone in particular gets these deals, whether through political position, corruption or privileged minority status. The scandal is that anyone gets these deals at all.

An extra level of insanity was added in the cable field during the 1980s, when Congress forbade regulation of cable prices. In most markets, where there is competition, price controls are folly. But when the government grants a monopoly, not to regulate prices is folly. Congress, listening to consumer complaints, finally saw this and—in its only override of a George Bush veto—authorized reregulation of cable prices in 1992. The FCC is now in its second round of cable price cuts.

Some big communications industry mergers, involving companies that own cable systems, have fallen through lately, and the principals have blamed cable reregulation for queering the deals. They, and other critics, say the government is putting unnecessary roadblocks in the vaunted "information superhighway." The complaint is absurd. It's true that the value of a cable system depends on the prices it can charge its customers, and a merger deal based on the assumption of one set of prices may fall through if those prices suddenly change. But that doesn't mean the government ought to guarantee inflated values for assets it gave away free, or nearly free.

Lately, the FCC has begun auctioning off its licenses, as it should have been doing all along, with the proceeds—maybe $12 billion in the next few years—going to the public treasury. But the agency still sometimes gives its goods away for free. In December it awarded the New York City franchise for advanced wireless communication to a tiny company it decreed to be a "pioneer." According to *The New York Times* the license is worth $250 million. Weep Hillary.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MAY 2, 1994

A START

Finally, the Clinton administration and the United States Western allies have done what they should have done long ago in Bosnia. They have used air power to stop the advance of Serbian troops on the ground—this time, the bloodstained ground of surrounded Gorazde. Initial reports indicate that, rather than move the United States and its allies closer to a protracted intervention, the air strikes have prompted precisely the response from the Serb forces that advocates predicted: faced with superior might, the Serbs stopped their shelling. Surprise! This principle had already been established by the Sarajevo ultimatum. Now another important principle has been added: the West's threats are not empty. We note with relief the irony that this turn of events took place just a week after Secretary of Defense William Perry ruled out any sort of military action (and we said we believed him). And we welcome, too, the end of the Pentagon's self-emasculating insistence on all-or-nothing intervention. Sometimes, a little involvement can work wonders.

Equally heartening was the fact that the administration proceeded with a refreshing lack of solicitude for Russian sensibilities, too much of which had previously hampered our freedom of action in the region. Russian President Boris Yeltsin complained loudly that he hadn't been consulted before the strikes on Gorazde were carried out. But to have done so would have exposed the West to operational delays and possible leaks of its plans to the Serbs. Yeltsin may actually be secretly pleased he wasn't informed. Now he has deniability vis-à-vis his right-wing critics who say he is a pawn of the West.

It has also been noted cynically in Washington that the air strikes on the "safe haven" come at a propitious time for an administration eager to relegate Whitewater to the back pages. We hope this isn't true. Even for the gonzo, stop-at-nothing political operatives of this world, tens of thousands of innocent lives might count more than a turn in Washington's spin-cycle. But what if it was? Perhaps it means that a president who has long seen foreign policy as the enemy of domestic policy is relearning a lesson his predecessors also came to learn: showing you're a man of your word abroad can lend credibility and muscle to your efforts at home.

The question is: Where does Bill Clinton propose to go from here? The president has shown a disconcerting tendency to pull his punches. He expressed reservations about the air strikes even as the bombs fell and sought to portray the actions as limited, one-shot affairs with no larger strategy than to push the Serbs to negotiate. After the second strike against Gorazde he chastised the Bosnian Muslims for "taking advantage" of the attacks to improve their military position. "We have no interest in using NATO air power to affect the outcome of the war," he reportedly told Yeltsin.

This can't be true, either as a statement of fact or as a statement of policy. In combat there is no way to calibrate accurately the reactions of the forces on the ground—naturally the Muslims took advantage of the assault to prevent a town of 65,000 refugees from falling to the Serbs. We hope instead that the president means the goal of his policy is to force the Serbs to bargain in good faith—and that they will keep getting pounded until they do. There's no reason this round of strikes must lead to open-ended conflict; the possible list of future targets is inherently limited by the fact that Sarajevo is quiet, by the Muslim-Croat armistice and by the lack of a clear and present danger to U.N. "safe areas" other than Gorazde.

If "neutrality" in this war means using the threat to United Nations peacekeepers as political cover for an air campaign (as U.N. Lt. Gen. Michael Rose has deftly done) to prevent the destruction of an ancient European people, then it is a useful ruse. If it is meant seriously, it is a false and pernicious idea. In a battle between a largely defenseless country and a neo-fascist, ethnic-cleansing aggressor, neutrality is offensive. We congratulate the Clinton administration for dispensing with it at last. •

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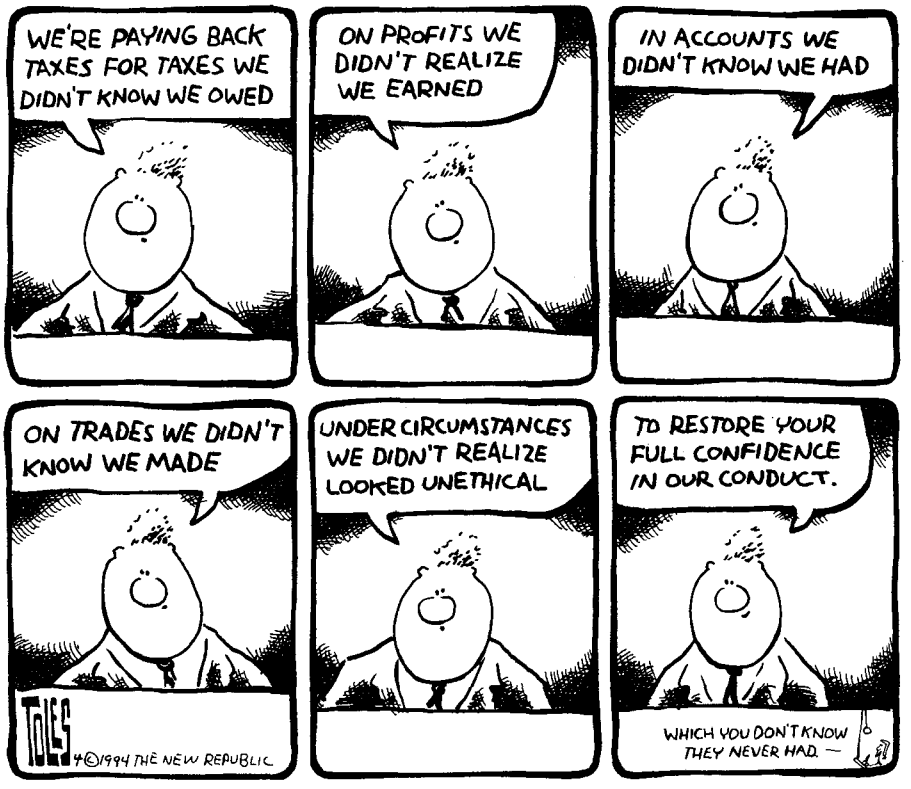
NOTEBOOK

JACKSON LIVE: Fresh from his successful campaign to "take back the streets" of Harlem and South-Central Los Angeles, Jesse Jackson reintruded himself onto the tense streets of Hebron and Jerusalem. Of course, he made it his business to see various Israelis and Palestinians, the better to burnish his image as a peace facilitator. But his real intentions were very clear. He had come to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the PLO, which, though it says vaguely that terrorism is now only in its past, doesn't have the stomach to condemn the Palestinian terrorism that continues to strike daily at Jews and Arabs alike, in the territories and out. Still, Yasir Arafat's legions are what you would have to call, in the relativistic world of Arab terror, moderate terrorists. There are also those for whom terror is not just a tactic or a strategy or an ideology but a full-blown theology, and, in Hebron, Jackson rallied with them as well. The local university is the all-but-official seat of Hamas in the West Bank, and there Jackson did his usual dithyrambic act. His visit was at best mischievous and more likely malign. Though many American Jewish leaders are eager to see Jackson as their friend, there is nothing on the record to support that claim and, if it weren't for his condemnation of Louis Farrakhan, it would be laughable.


WE'RE PAYING BACK TAXES FOR TAXES WE DIDN'T KNOW WE OWED
ON PROFITS WE DIDN'T REALIZE WE EARNED
IN ACCOUNTS WE DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD
ON TRADES WE DIDN'T KNOW WE MADE
UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WE DIDN'T REALIZE LOOKED UNETHICAL
TO RESTORE YOUR FULL CONFIDENCE IN OUR CONDUCT.
WHICH YOU DON'T KNOW THEY NEVER HAD.
TOLES
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SARAJEVO CHIC WATCH: For some American and European intellectuals, solidarity with their counterparts in bleeding Bosnia has been a genuine commitment. For others, pity for the city has been mainly an exercise in personal moral hygiene. Take *Vanity Fair*'s debonair critic-at-large, Christopher Hitchens. He visited wartime Sarajevo once, almost two years ago. Ever since, he has been lunching out on the emotional and political insight he supposedly garnered from this brief sojourn. Asked recently by *The Washington Post* to review a new photo show about Bosnia by Gilles Peress, Hitchens wrote of "a marvelous view from his hotel window ... of a twin skyscraper, seared and battered from top to bottom by shellfire, which I recognized as the former offices of the heroic Sarajevo newspaper *Oslobodenje*, now published from a bunker underneath the wreckage." Sadly, Hitchens was "recognizing" the wrong place. The photo, reproduced in the *Post*, is in fact a view of the Unis Towers, a corporate office building. *Oslobodenje* is two miles away.

THE CASE FOR HYSTERIA: Has the anti-anti-press-backlash-backlash set in yet in the Whitewater affair? If so, let's stay in that mode for a while. You don't have to defend every story written on the subject to note that, thanks to the press's attention, the voters already have a lot more information (not all of it damning) about the Clintons' character. And few things written at the peak of the media "feeding frenzy" have rivaled the hyperbole used by the recent crop of pooh-poohers. "I do see a crisis: an oncoming crisis of confidence in the press," writes *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis. *New York* magazine's media critic, Jon Katz, notes with alarm that "reporters are free to pursue or explore any behavior their editors or producers deem immoral or improper or vaguely scummy." Shocking indeed. The respectable defense of the coverage (accountability, etc.) has by now been ably made in the *Times* and *The Economist*, among others. But there is a less respectable defense to be made of precisely the hysterical, obsessive quality that so many reasonable people find offensive. It is this: without some hysteria, the truth doesn't come out. If the press hadn't said, in effect, "Look, we're suspicious of you for not releasing your tax returns, and if you don't release them we're going to take up most of your press conferences asking you about them," then the Clintons would never have released them, and we would not have known about the First Lady's commodities speculations. In addition, a bit of hysteria is often necessary to goose reluctant sources into coming forward. Sure, when it's all done, the level of hysteria sometimes doesn't match the level of revelation. That may or may not turn out to be the case with Whitewater. But we won't know until the facts are all out. •

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KAMCHATKA POSTCARD

OUT OF IT

By Nancy Shute

Last night, like most nights, I lay on my narrow Soviet bed until 4 a.m., when I was jolted awake by the sound of drunken Korean mafiosi arguing under my bedroom window. Today, I jumped for a snowbank to avoid a fur-hatted Russian hurtling gleefully down Leninskaya Street in his first car—a $2,000 used Mazda that still sports the logo of a Tokyo travel agency. In the central market grandmothers in flowered shawls and felt boots sang the virtues of "little pirogi, hot and fresh" while flinty blondes hawked Chinese dog-fur coats and Bulgarian chardonnay. My plastic shopping bag read: "In a sign of friendship from the Japanese people." It cost 600 rubles.

This is not how I had imagined life in Kamchatka, the mountainous 900-mile-long peninsula north of Japan that until 1991 was one of the last outposts of the Soviet empire. My thoughts ran more to tossing down vodka and smoked salmon after skiing with broad-shouldered guys named Kostya or Kolya. But then, this is not how anyone imagined life in post-Communist Russia. Every day is an improvisation; it's hard to know if the theme is "free at last" or "free to be just another Third World backwater."

The disorientation is especially acute here in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, a city of 350,000 on a volcano-rimmed bay off the North Pacific. A frontier of the Russian empire since Vitus Bering set sail from Avacha Bay to discover Alaska in 1749, Petropavlovsk has been closed to Westerners for most of this century; it is a storage site for Soviet nuclear submarines and medium-range missiles. When I first arrived in April 1991 it was innocent and chaste—a Soviet Shangri-la that lured residents with fat government paychecks and a spectacular landscape inhabited by giant grizzly bears and trophy-sized trout. Today, the perks are gone, but the isolation remains. You may no longer need a special *propiska* stamped in your passport to come here, but Moscow is still nine time zones away. Add to that the fact that parts of the twentieth century have passed Kamchatka by and we're talking *Brigadoon* with kimchi and borscht.

My students at the Kamchatka State Pedagogical Institute, where I teach journalism, have heard no Bob Dylan songs recorded before 1988. They have read no American authors more recent than Jack London and Ernest Hemingway. They know Julia Roberts but not Lyle Lovett. They know Madonna and Charles Barkley, but they've never heard of Solidarity or Vaclav Havel. Now, however, the frontier is opening up to the world. The soap opera "Santa Barbara" and its Mexican counterpart, "Simply Maria," remain wildly popular, and pirated American movies (*The Firm, Rambling Rose*) appear on local T.V. with increasing regularity. Last fall "Twin Peaks" materialized in the middle of a particularly frightening spate of earthquakes. Its casual cruelty, dubbed into Russian, seemed an appropriate accompaniment to watching the Stalinist-era walls shudder.

As one of Kamchatka's four resident Americans (counting two Baha'i missionaries and a business instructor from Alaska), I can't help thinking that the changes are making life better. My students at the Ped-Institute are publishing the peninsula's first English-language newspaper using laser printers and photocopiers cadged around town. (Four years ago it was illegal to own a photocopier.) Many families I know have cars; some have two. (Cars and apartments are the only investments that offer any hedge against 900 percent inflation.) We have no CNN or *Newsweek*, but I'm on the Internet through the local post office. Lemons, impossible to find six months ago, are suddenly widely available. Just last week taco shells appeared at the Petropavlovsk department store, helpfully labeled "blini." They flew off the shelves, as did the Lipton onion soup mix, the Western Family brownie mix and the Rosarita refried beans—all miraculous conveniences in a country where putting supper on the table usually starts with growing the potatoes.

Still, no one can figure out how a free-market consumer economy works in conjunction with a Soviet wage scale. Two hundred dollars a month is not considered a bad wage for a university graduate; my Ped-Institute colleagues make less than $100 per month (when they get paid at all). In the past Moscow kept Kamchatka and other outposts well subsidized, providing workers with double salaries and tickets for long vacations at the Black Sea. Today, the outposts seem to have been forgotten; not infrequently, the local government runs out of cash. At Christmas we endured rolling power blackouts because the army hadn't paid its electric bill to the city of Petropavlovsk. "Santa Barbara" was blacked out for a few nights last month because the city hadn't paid its T.V. bill. I stopped by the Central Bank several weeks ago to buy rubles, only to find a hand-lettered sign reading "NO MONEY." "Oh, come on," I said to the teller. "I gotta eat." She sighed and peeled $50 worth from her dwindling stack.

"Life is more difficult here now, but better," says Fedor, a sable researcher who just returned to his laboratory after a six-month unpaid "vacation." "During the Gorbachev years we had *talones* [ration coupons] for chicken, milk, butter. Each person got one kilo of kasha a month. But life was simpler before. Now everything is more complicated. And the prices!" Fedor is right; in the past six months prices for bread and other essentials have more than doubled. A loaf of white bread costs the equivalent of fifty-seven cents; chicken is $2.17 per kilo; hothouse cucumbers are $4.50 per kilo. Not bad in the

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real world, but terrifying for people like my landlady, a 58-year-old ex-schoolteacher who receives a pension of $77 per month.

Kamchatka's only real industry is fishing—a good business to be in when you've got one of the world's richest salmon stocks, as the peninsula does. Yet after the fall of communism members of the *nomenklatura* put themselves in charge of the "joint ventures" that replaced the collectives. Predictably, they plunder Kamchatka's fishery with a rapacity that would astonish even Boss Tweed.

In Petropavlovsk, thin spots in the social fabric are increasingly visible. Homeless people sleep in the marine terminal; earlier this year paramedics refused to treat two drunks because they lacked proper documents. The men died. Last month we feasted on reports of a mafia war that opened with a Kalashnikov shoot-out in the bar of the city's ritziest restaurant and closed with the discovery of five bullet-riddled bodies in a flaming jeep. Old news for Washington or L.A., maybe, but shocking here. One candidate in last month's local elections proposed closing Kamchatka to Chechens and Georgians, the ethnic groups most often blamed for organized crime. Many of my friends think that's not such a bad idea.

In truth, Kamchatka doesn't have patience with much that comes from Russia anymore. Talk of secession among local politicians has moved from wistful to "why not?"; it has been fueled by dreams of a revitalized fishing industry, a shipping hub for the North Pacific and tourism based on Kamchatka's unspoiled environment. In *Brigadoon* the villagers decide that the modern world isn't worth the trouble. Who, living in the instability of the former Soviet Union today, wouldn't want to pull in the welcome mat, lock the door and stay home?

NANCY SHUTE is a Fulbright Scholar living in Kamchatka.

Jerry Brown's call-in karma.

RADIO DAZE

By Jennifer Allen

Upside down in yoga class, I once mistook Jerry Brown for Mr. Rogers. Today, there is no such confusion. Today, we are in the control room of KTVU, Oakland, for the taping of "We the People with Jerry Brown," a syndicated, five-day-a-week, two-hour radio call-in show. Brown sits behind the sound booth glass, a map of the United States beside him, several pages of typed manuscript in front of him and a couple of cue cards that read: "What I hear you saying is . . . " and "What I got out of what you said is. . . ." Brown, on stand by, is in standard Brown form: gray sideburns, wild eyebrows, balding head, Transport Workers Local Union 100 satin baseball jacket, faded blue jeans, worn New Balance running shoes. On the wall is a clock cut into red and black pie pieces, designating time parcels of commercials and news and talk for the broadcast. The longest segment averages eleven minutes of nonstop, single-spaced Jerry Brown.

The show begins with a reading of the Constitution, chanted by children, followed by a Los Lobos song no one seems to know the title of—not even Jacques Barzaghi, Brown's former campaign manager and twenty-three-year volunteer, who selected the song and suggests it is something to the effect of "When Time Was Nice in America." This suits Brown's opening pitch: "To get at the truth by exposing the deceptions and distortions that are undermining the country: the decline of morality, the corruption of basic values, the loss of caring and the crisis in so many cities that are now wastelands of loneliness, crime and squalor." Add to this the theme of today's show—the role the media plays in all of this—and you have entered Mr. Brown's neighborhood.

To get to the Jerry Brown show, one volunteer tells me, "You take the freeway that wasn't here before the earthquake and get off on that street that was that other street before the quake, you know, the one with the 'whoop-de-do' off-ramp, that one, and get off on that." To prepare for the show, I try to listen to a bit of it. Driving through the Oakland hills, scanning the radio dial, I catch clips of Jerry's drift along each and every turn: "seminary ... politics ... community." To understand the show, I sit in this small, warm, rented studio with Brown in stereo and Jacques in a squeaky business chair.

Jacques wears black ankle boots, black jeans, black bomber jacket, black sweatshirt worn inside out, gold chain with a cross swung around the back of his neck, wire-rim glasses and a Solidarity-pinned black beret on top of a completely shaved head. When I say it is a pleasure to meet him, Jacques says, "Oh, is it?" When I ask if he is the co-producer of the show, Jacques clicks his heels, salutes and says, "No." Says, "Titles are dangerous." Says, "We all basically volunteer here."

Volunteer. Key word. Especially key when Brown suggests I come in and help him write for the show. Meaning, volunteer. When I ask Diane, a sweatered brunette wearing a headset, how long she has worked with Brown, the answer is, "I volunteer." Ask anyone in the We the People offices how long they have worked for Brown and you are more likely to hear "I volunteer" than a specific time frame. We the People is a 501C4 one volunteer tells me; that is, a nonprofit, non-tax deductible organization with more than 6,000 full-time supporters, all upholding Brown's mission: "Speaking Truth To Power."

The show, which runs on a month-to-month contract with Talk America Radio, has been on since January 31—not long enough to have any ratings, but long enough to pick up thirty stations. The goal is to some day escape the rented space at KTVU and build a private

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radio station in the American Bag Company, a warehouse Brown has bought along the Oakland waterfront, an area Brown calls a "Soho in the making." The broadcast will then be aired from the warehouse showrooms so that, as one volunteer notes, passers-by "can look up and watch Jerry on the radio."

No one is allowed to sit in front of Brown during the show. "Too distracting," says Jacques. You have to sit to the side of the glass, out of his line of sight. Very rarely will Brown look out at us, or even at Jacques, pacing and motioning with a finger across his throat when one caller goes on too long about pharmaceuticals. Nor does Brown seem to pay too much attention to the cardboard signs Jacques periodically holds up to the glass, signs that cue Brown as to when to cut it off, how to cut it off, where to cut it off.

On the line now from Monterro, California, is John.

"Hello, Jerry," says John.

"Hi, there!"

"Born in San Francisco like you, a little bit younger than you and uh, not so smart, but I, I have my thoughts and I think kind of like the average American and I'd like to switch gears just a touch . . . "

The gears shift from Brown's talk of media coverage of the 1992 Democratic National Convention to talk of the national security state. "You got the president asking Congress to allow the federal government to have listening devices in every single telephone device in America," Brown says. "So I guess what's goose for—what is it?—what's sauce for the goose is goose for the gander or something."

"And everyone says he has no sense of humor," says Jacques.

It is late afternoon and there are only a few calls coming in. "It's not like people are knocking down the door," notes Diane, sipping tea from a personalized Styrofoam cup. When callers do call the talk touches on everything from medical malpractice to a police raid on the house of a man who sucked venom out of a frog to get high. Brown manages to weave through it all, somehow bringing every topic back to his stance that the media is "a $200-billion commercial industrial complex," that public broadcasting is "Pablum for the people" and that "the communication system between the global companies, the hustling politicians and their selling of the public trust and the manipulation and undermining of the common sense values, morality and culture [is] a big system to confront."

The structure of Brown's show is: news, ads, talk. Tonight the news includes the Clintons' tax returns and the federal budget. The ads include the Best of Victor Borgia, the Best of Randy Travis and *The Wall Street Journal.* The talk includes "manipulation/manipulative" (eight times); "propaganda" (four times); "reality" (three times). When Brown says, "global economy," Jacques says, "glo-ba-loney." When Brown says, "churn rate," Jacques says, "Jerry likes that word, 'churn rate.' " When Brown says, "Tower of Babel," Jacques says, "That's a good sound bite, Jerry."

Another volunteer has come in to help with production. Dressed in rubber-soled shoes, white socks, white jeans and a beige trench coat, the volunteer nods to everything Brown says. He holds a clipboard, the back of which reads NUTS, listing names of frequent callers who should not be put live on the air with Brown. The volunteer writes down callers' names and locales on an erasable card and hangs them on one of the three hooks stuck to the sound booth. Jacques reorders the cards on the hooks, quizzes the volunteer as to why he removed one before a station break, notes to everyone present that we do not screen calls on the Jerry Brown show, but occasionally we have to when "Mr. UFO calls in."

"It's lots of fun!" says Brown, when asked, between ads, if it is. Next, Brown is asked about yoga. Jerry Brown, former Jesuit seminarian, former California governor, former presidential candidate, reformed politician, then goes on to discuss the difficulty of a particular yoga class with a particular instructor, one who, Brown says, makes you hold the Warrior for something like eight minutes. The Warrior is a sort of lunge: front leg bent, back leg straight, one arm back, one arm forward, eyes straight ahead, looking past your fingertips, through the wall and into eternity. Brown can't do it. He says it's absolutely exhausting.

Back in the yoga room that day, limbs entangled beside me, toenails near my face, Brown was calling out to the instructor, "Is this right? Am I doing it right?" The instructor walked across the room, smiled, held Brown's shoulder, said, "Yes, Jerry, you're doing it right." The instructor then squeezed his shoulder, and said for all the class to hear, "You know, there's one in every class." To which everyone laughed—everyone except the former governor, who simply, obediently, quietly held the pose, and continued to sweat.

JENNIFER ALLEN is a free-lance writer.

The fallacy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

THE BAN PLAYS ON

By Hanna Rosin

Senior Airman Robert Wilson did something last December he now describes as "really stupid," because it ended his military career. Fighting boredom on the night shift, he wrote a letter to a friend on his office computer at Base Mildenhall in London, telling him that he had broken up with his boyfriend Jimmy and describing a pick-up scene at a gay bar. He deleted the letter that night, but another airman retrieved it and gave a copy of it to the base commander. No one had asked Wilson if he was gay, and he never told

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anyone, but the military pursued. The commander waited until the following Friday at 4:30 p.m., when the barracks were full, to send two investigators to search Wilson's room. There they found the proof they needed: a copy of Randy Shilts's *Conduct Unbecoming*, about the history of gays in the military; a copy of *M.X.*, a gay magazine; a tape of a PBS miniseries on gay life in San Francisco in the '70s; a letter consoling a friend who is HIV-positive; and the real gem—Wilson's diary, in which he mentions other gay servicemen by their nicknames (he refused to identify them). In February the commander recommended a less-than-honorable discharge, stripping Wilson of his veteran's benefits. It was upgraded to honorable when Wilson agreed to waive his right to a trial.

All this happened after last July's announcement of the new "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" policy for gays in the military, which President Clinton called a "major step forward" that would "end the witch-hunts." While critics complained that the ban wasn't lifted, even they hailed the policy as "a real advance for civil rights" and predicted a "drastic reduction in homosexual prosecutions" (as TNR put it). In fact, the new policy has turned out to be a reworded version of the old, and in some ways it has made things worse. It has *not* decreased the number of discharges for homosexuality; in fiscal year 1993, including eight months in which the new policy was in effect, there were 773 discharges, compared with 708 in fiscal year 1992. It has *not* created a climate in which heterosexuals and homosexuals are treated equally; to date, no straight servicemembers have been investigated for consensual sodomy or prostitution. And its attempt to end the witch-hunt by shifting the focus from "status" to "conduct" has been totally ineffectual.

In selling its policy to gay rights groups in July, the administration brandished the status/conduct distinction as a critical change. "Sexual orientation is considered a personal and private matter," then-Defense Secretary Les Aspin announced at the July press conference. Conduct violations, he added, will be investigated "regardless of whether the person is homosexual or heterosexual." While both notions are part of the Department of Defense rules, they are contradicted by other parts and are violated in practice. The rules include an exception that gay activists call "Queen for a Day": "if the conduct is a departure from your usual behavior"—if you're not really gay—then the conduct is excused. They define as homosexual conduct hand-holding, kissing and, more important, statements declaring your status, which make you guilty until you prove you have never acted or intend to act on your attractions. Drinking at gay bars, marching in gay parades and reading gay literature are actions that the rules specify are not evidence of homosexual conduct, yet as Defense Secretary William Perry acknowledged in his confirmation hearing, these actions can be used as evidence "if a reliable person observed behavior that he or she believes amounts to a nonverbal statement that the servicemember is a homosexual." In other words, if someone sees you go to a gay bar, assumes you're gay and reports it, a commander can launch an investigation.

In reality, the focus on conduct has led to nothing more than creative phrasing of questions, and in some cases it has backfired by inviting more intrusive probes. In one case, investigators got around two restrictions—one against status investigations and one against asking the accused to name other homosexuals—by asking the servicemember to drive them by the homes of servicemen he knew had engaged in gay conduct. Two of the men whose homes he drove by are now under investigation. An Air Force captain in Fayetteville, North Carolina, got around the gay bar exception by putting all the gay bars in the area on the list of "off-limits establishments"—a list normally reserved for businesses known to cheat servicemembers, like disreputable mechanics. Last month two agents claiming to be doing a routine security investigation visited a male friend of a serviceman who had accepted the Navy's early retirement plan. Instead of asking if the servicemember was gay, they asked if the two were romantically involved and if they had sodomized or masturbated each other. They then went to all the gay bars in the area with a picture of the servicemember and asked bartenders if they knew him. Subsequently, the servicemember's security clearance was pulled, and he is now being court-martialed—even though the new rules expressly forbid information from a security clearance investigation to be used in a discharge proceeding.

What most undermines the new policy's potential are inadvertent and third-party disclosures, which can expose even the most carefully closeted servicemember. The new rules forbid inquiries based on "rumor, suspicion or capricious claims concerning a member's sexual orientation," but this has not stopped some overzealous commanders. The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) cites these scenarios: a servicemember investigated after an anonymous phone call to his base commander; another investigated because he had taken notes on homosexuality for a class; another investigated after police searched his roommate's belongings for drugs and found a letter on his side of the room mentioning homosexuality. And as cases like Robert Wilson's show, commanders continue to solicit information about other servicemembers during investigations, a clear violation of rules that limit inquiries to "factual circumstances directly relevant to the specific allegations."

Worse, gay servicemembers have nowhere to turn for counseling. Conversations with psychiatrists and clergy are not protected; in fact, professionals have a duty to report admissions of homosexuality. There is also no protection from harassment. A servicemember who complains to his commander about threats against him because he is gay could be discharged. And servicemembers in military courts are afforded few luxuries of civilian jurisprudence. There are no exclusionary rules, so evidence illegally obtained can be used, and refusing to answer questions is considered an admission of guilt.

DOD spokesman Doug Hart insists the rules are applied in an "evenhanded" manner and that no abuses occur. When I recounted specific incidents, he said they

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were "impossible." What about servicemembers asked to turn in others? "You can't ask about other people. It's explicit in the new directives," Hart said. "It didn't happen." In December DOD proudly announced that the discharge figure for fiscal year 1993 showed a drop of nearly sixty from 1992. But that figure omitted the 115 servicemembers whom DOD wanted to dismiss but couldn't because of an injunction issued in a case that challenged the gay ban. In October—one week after the fiscal year ended—the Supreme Court overturned the injunction, and all 115 were discharged.

In another disturbing trend, the Pentagon has tried to recoup scholarships and bonuses from nine servicemembers discharged for homosexuality—a practice it gave up in 1988. In one case, Eric Fenner received a $4,500 bonus after graduating from training at a Navy nuclear power plant in 1992. By that time he realized he was gay but thought "Clinton might change things." When he later disclosed his homosexuality to a chaplain, he was discharged. The next summer he got a letter from the Defense Financial Services asking for $2,046 back. In another case, the Army is trying to collect $24,000 of a ROTC scholarship from Michelle Keenan, who was discharged in March after she disclosed her homosexuality. "The military can't have it both ways," says Michelle Benecke, an executive director of the SLDN. "The military rewarded them with scholarships and they want to stay. They were kicked out against their will, for reasons unrelated to their performance." Hart says it is "entirely appropriate" for DOD to recoup funds, and claims the practice protects the military from fraud by those who know they are gay. Yet in 1988, according to *Conduct Unbecoming*, even former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney agreed the policy was "vindictive" and privately ordered commanders to back off.

One positive result of the debate over the new policy is that injunctions blocking its implementation have left a handful of people serving openly and with distinction, disproving the military's claim that cohesion would be destroyed if the gay ban were lifted. After being thrown out of the Navy in January 1993 one hour after telling his commander he was gay, Lt. Dirk Selland filed suit challenging the ban's constitutionality and was reinstated; he has now served openly as a gay man for a year and was recently promoted. "It's terrific," says Selland. "I even danced with the commander's wife." Marine Sgt. Justin Elzie came out on ABC's "World News Tonight" on January 29, the day Senator Sam Nunn forced Clinton to back off his promise and institute a six-month interim policy, and was discharged soon after. In October, after challenging the ban in court, he was reinstated; he is now the only openly gay servicemember in the Marines, and he has been recommended for a promotion.

Meanwhile, on April 4 Judge Eugene Nickerson of New York barred DOD from dismissing six servicemembers in the first legal challenge to the new policy, arguing that it went no further than the old in safeguarding homosexuals. "The new policy isn't worth the paper it's written on," Elzie says. "Every day we serve and there's no bad morale, we're showing it's a big mistake." •

The emotional jurisprudence of Harry Blackmun.

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

By Jeffrey Rosen

It seems ungenerous, perhaps, to dissent from the praise that has been lavished on Harry Blackmun since he announced his retirement from the Supreme Court last week. Blackmun was, as President Clinton said, a good and decent and humane man, whose compassion suffused his work and his life. Unlike some of his colleagues, he took his job seriously until the very end, and rather than flitting about to dinners and receptions, he worked long and lonely hours poring over the facts of the most obscure cases and agonizing about the fate of the parties. If Blackmun tended to get mired in trivial details, if many of his opinions seemed legally unsophisticated and overly emotional and if he often appeared to reach the right result for the wrong reasons, nevertheless he cared about the Court and the country with a sincerity that commands respect.

But feeling deeply is no substitute for arguing rigorously; and the qualities that made Blackmun an admirable man ultimately condemned him to be an ineffective justice. By reducing so many cases to their human dimensions and refusing to justify his impulses with principled legal arguments, Blackmun showed the dangers of the jurisprudence of sentiment. He committed liberals to the unfortunate and inaccurate proposition that justices *must* resort to personal sympathy in order to justify liberal results. Although he occupied the seat of Holmes and Cardozo, Blackmun will be remem-

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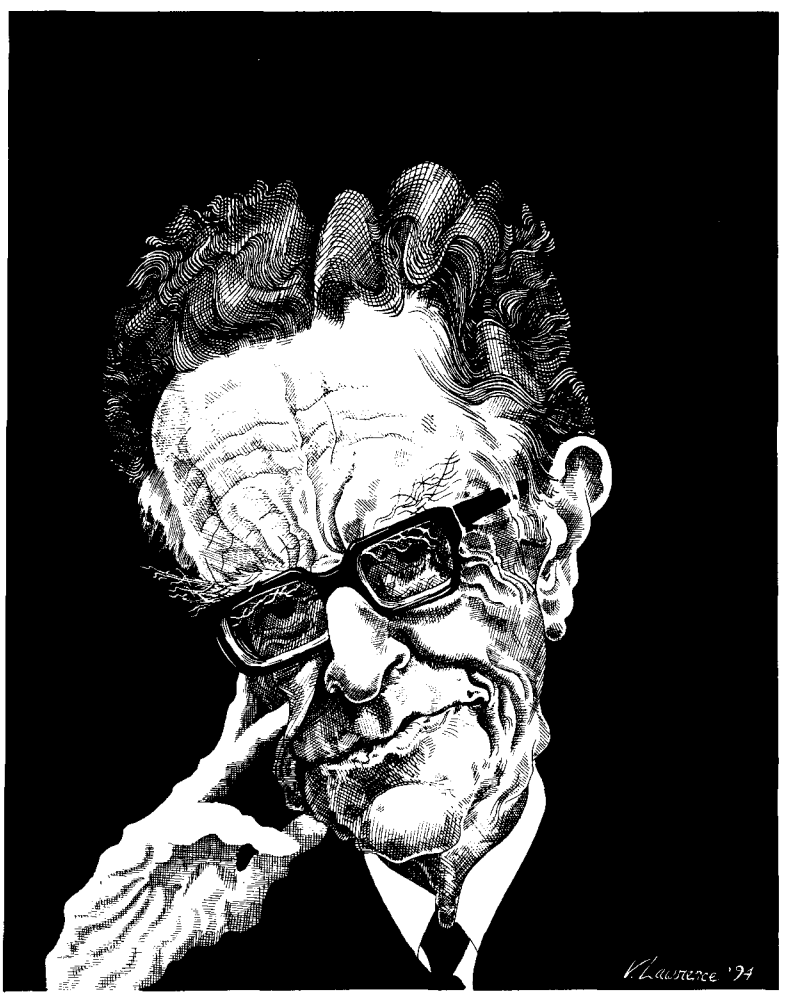
bered in the rank of Frank Murphy, the warmhearted New Dealer who wrote emotional dissents on behalf of the poor and powerless, but whose tendency to let his heart get the better of his head deprived him of lasting influence. Clinton has promised to replace Blackmun with a justice in Blackmun's image; but if he really cares about giving liberals an effective voice on the Court, perhaps he should think again.

In explaining his evolution from conservative to liberal, Blackmun made the customary disclaimer that he had remained the same while the Court had changed. And, in a sense, the sentimental strain was evident from the start. In both his conservative and his liberal incarnations, Blackmun repeatedly brushed aside legal abstractions and focused instead on human predicaments. At his confirmation hearings in 1971, he expressed the hope that his opinions would show "in the treatment of little people, what I hope is a sensitivity to their problems."



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the process of personalizing case after case, however, Blackmun often misinterpreted or ignored the underlying constitutional issues in ways that hardly served constitutional values over time. In his maiden opinion, *Wyman* v. *James* (1972), he said that welfare officials didn't need a search warrant to inspect a welfare mother's home against her will. But instead of concentrating on the text and history of the Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable searches and seizures, Blackmun resorted to sentimental homilies, depicting the welfare caseworker "not as a sleuth but rather, we trust, ... a friend to one in need." He also found some evidence that the mother's 2-year-old child may have been abused: "There are indications that all was not always well with the infant Maurice (skull fracture, a dent in the head, a possible rat bite). The picture is a sad and unhappy one." Ultimately, Blackmun's impulsive sympathy for "the infant Maurice" and the social worker led him to narrow the scope of Fourth Amendment doctrine.

Blackmun's sympathies became progressively more liberal, but his methodology remained the same. In 1981 he voted to uphold a California law that punished men, but not women, for having sex with minors. Because he despaired of the human costs of teenage pregnancies, Blackmun rejected the Ruth Bader Ginsburg position—that the Constitution protects men as well as women from gender discrimination. But he couldn't resist including irrelevant, and strangely prurient, excerpts from the trial transcript suggesting that the 16-year-old girl may have been a willing participant in the rape: "He started kissing me again and we were laying on the bench. And he told me to take my pants off. I said, 'No,' and ... I let him do what he wanted to do...." Again, Blackmun's conflicted impulses to do justice between the parties confused his analysis of sex discrimination.

There are, of course, several varieties of sentimental jurisprudence, and they competed uneasily throughout Blackmun's career. There is the sentimentality of particularism—focusing on the human consequences of every decision. There is also the sentimentality of compassion—a more abstract commitment to dramatizing the plight of the poor and the downtrodden, without reference to actual individuals. "There is another world 'out there,' the existence of which the Court, I suspect, either chooses to ignore or fears to recognize," Blackmun wrote repeatedly. But neither his particularism nor his emotionalism was especially consistent; and despite his rich rhetoric, his sweeping generalizations were rarely supported by rigorous empirical analysis.

Blackmun's 1978 dissent in the *Bakke* case is a good example. "The sooner we get down the road toward accepting and being a part of the real world, the sooner will these difficulties vanish from the scene," Blackmun declared in his dissent, which would have upheld the University of California–Davis's explicit quota for minority medical students. "In order to get beyond

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For Arnold

George Mitchell's withdrawal of his Supreme Court candidacy leaves the White House with a list of familiar names, many of them left over from the search that ended with the selection of Ruth Bader Ginsburg last year. Stephen Breyer of Boston and Amalya Kearse of New York are back in the running (see "The List," TNR, May 10, 1993). The leading contenders this week, however, seem to be José Cabranes of Connecticut, Drew Days, the U.S. solicitor-general, and Richard Arnold of Arkansas. While Days and Cabranes are able legal thinkers, Arnold is, on the merits, the best person for the job. It would be unfortunate, not to say perverse, if his Arkansas roots kept him off the Court.

Conservatives are already preparing to "Bork" Days because of his controversial, but plausible, interpretation of the federal child pornography law. In fact, the soft-spoken former Yale law professor has always been distinguished by a careful, if opaque, moderation. Nevertheless, he sometimes had trouble taking stands. In a 1987 article in the *Yale Law Journal* he expressed fears that the Supreme Court and Congress, in enacting and approving minority set-asides, had gone too far in promoting racialism. His criticism, however, was delicately hedged. Similarly, in "Brown Blues," a 1992 article for the *William and Mary Law Review*, Days questioned various forms of racial separatism without clearly endorsing an alternative. His oral arguments as solicitor-general have been competent but uninspired; they suggest that Days, despite his judicious temperament, might not be a vigorous leader on the Court.

Cabranes, too, has been unfairly characterized: as a slow worker and a closet conservative. In fact, he is the most efficient judge on a district court with a badly overloaded docket. And although he surfaced on President Bush's Supreme Court list, and was promoted as a conservative at the time, his record suggests he is a right-leaning moderate. Cabranes is most famous for calling the federal sentencing guidelines a "dismal failure." According to former clerks, he dislikes the guidelines not only because they restrict judicial discretion, but also because they destroy the drama of sentencing hearings, which ritualistically impress on criminals the enormity of their crimes. He is also sensitive to civil liberties: for example, he ruled in 1986 that indiscriminate police searches at a Ku Klux Klan rally violated the Fourth Amendment. In private, Cabranes has a wry sense of humor. Clerks say that Cabranes, who grew up middle-class in Queens and went to Yale, sees the irony in being promoted as an icon from the barrio. He is slated for a seat on the Second Circuit, and after he has had a chance to address constitutional issues as an appellate judge, he should be considered again for a promotion.

But although Days and Cabranes are able candidates, Arnold is in a different class. Clinton, by several accounts, would like to nominate his fellow Arkansan to the Court but, in the wake of Whitewater, considers it politically implausible because of the appearance of cronyism. But the appearance has nothing to do with reality. Arnold is one of the most respected appellate judges in the nation. Of the current candidates, he seems the best prepared to articulate an energetic, principled liberal vision.

Throughout his career, Richard Arnold has combined erudition with modesty. He graduated first in his class at Yale College and at Harvard Law School, and was famous for reading the Bible in Latin, Greek and Hebrew for fun. (When an Oxford debater tried to floor him by quoting the Cataline orations, Arnold finished the quotation—"How long, O Cataline, will you abuse our patience?"—and won the debate.) He went on to clerk for William Brennan in 1960 and, according to David Garrow's *Liberty and Sexuality*, was considered among fellow clerks as an "undeniable intellectual star." Brennan, for example, accepted Arnold's recommendation that *Poe* v. *Ullman*, the first contraceptive case, should be dismissed because the trial record was inadequate. After practicing law and running unsuccessfully for the House of Representatives in 1966 (he lost to David Pryor, now one of Arkansas's senators, in the Democratic primary), Arnold became a protégé not of Bill Clinton but of Dale Bumpers, then the governor, who sponsored his nomination to the bench in 1978.

What makes Arnold's opinions exciting to read is the combination of legal sophistication and concise eloquence. (Like his judicial hero, Hugo Black, whose picture hangs on his wall, Arnold writes most of his own opinions.) His instincts appear to be in the moderate liberal camp. His comprehensive voting rights opinion in *Jeffers* v. *Clinton* rejected Governor Clinton's proposed apportionment plan as not expansive enough to satisfy the Voting Rights Act. At the same time, he has not been afraid to question some of the extremes of Guinierism. In a dramatic death penalty case decided on April 8 he faithfully applied Supreme Court precedent and overturned a district judge's efforts to stop an execution, because he found no evidence of actual innocence.

In the 1988 *Webster* abortion case Arnold wrote that the provisions forbidding abortion counseling, which the Supreme Court later upheld in *Rust* v. *Sullivan*, were "flatly inconsistent with the First Amendment." He properly felt compelled by precedent to uphold parental consent provisions for teenagers. Nevertheless, as Judge Patricia Wald wrote in a tribute to Arnold in the *Minnesota Law Review*, "orthodox feminists must recognize that his position [on reproductive rights] is in most respects far more expansive than the present Supreme Court's."

Arnold has taken the most heat for a single opinion later overturned by Justice Brennan. In 1983 he ruled that the Jaycees had a First Amendment right not to admit women, although he stressed that he disagreed with them, because their activities involved political expression. "He made it clear that he felt they were wrong but that as he analyzed the First Amendment they had the right to be wrong," says Diana Savit, president of the D.C. Women's Bar Association. "I don't think that makes him a sexist." In other cases, Arnold has vigorously enforced women's rights, striking down, for example, Arkansas state school rules that required teenage girls, but not boys, to play half-court basketball.

Arnold seems to possess many of the qualities that Harry Blackmun lacked: legal sophistication, graceful writing, warmhearted gregariousness, self-restraint and the ability to persuade by intelligent argument. On a court of monks, he might provide precisely the kind of leadership that Bill Clinton seeks. The lesson of the Ginsburg nomination is that the surest way of being vindicated is to choose the best candidate. That's Arnold.

JEFFREY ROSEN

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racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way." But in fact, there were *many* less radical alternatives, such as the Harvard emphasis on goals rather than quotas, which Blackmun failed to explore. And his opinion failed to examine the actual operation of the Davis program. As Drew Days, now the U.S. solicitor-general, has argued, the trial record revealed little about why the Davis program was established, after what deliberations, with what ultimate purpose and why Asian Americans were indiscriminately lumped in with blacks. Instead, the Court was presented with a series of post hoc arguments from the medical school's lawyers, which Blackmun uncritically accepted.

"To say that he's a sentimentalist is to give him more than he deserves," says Bruce Ackerman of Yale. "He was a person with a conventional mind, without a consistent method, who moved from the right to the left." A more charitable way of explaining the inconsistent strains in Blackmun's work is that he was miscast as a liberal prophet. As a personality, he was finicky to the point of obsessiveness. He would sit silently at oral arguments, interrupting only rarely to ask weirdly specific factual questions: How high was the grass in the St. Paul cross burning case, he wanted to know; or had the government lawyer in the Haitian refugee case read Graham Greene's *The Comedians*? A long-standing joke depicted Blackmun as the clerk and his clerks as the justice: he would fret about spelling errors and typos, and laboriously check all the case citations by hand, as they drafted opinions aspiring to the grand style.

But the grandiose rhetoric often struck a false and unnatural note, for it was hard to reconcile with Blackmun's purportedly modest personality. Blackmun is, by all accounts, a humble, even insecure, man whose constant self-deprecation is both endearing and poignant. When he circulated the first draft of *Roe* v. *Wade* he apologized for its "rambling quality." When he received speaking invitations he would typically shake his head and ask his clerks: "I wonder what possessed them to ask me? I guess I'll go, if they want me, but I can't imagine I'll have anything useful to say." His opinions, however, were often anything but modest; and their over-ripe, self-dramatizing strain—"I fear for the darkness as four justices anxiously await the single vote necessary to extinguish the light," he wrote in the *Casey* abortion case—seemed oddly disconnected from the man himself.

Blackmun's conflicting qualities converged in his death penalty dissent last February. In the *Callins* case he announced that, after agonizing about the question for twenty-two years, he had concluded that the death penalty is cruel and unusual in all circumstances. There was something unseemly, first of all, about the public fan-dancing that preceded the revelation. Whatever possessed him to go on "Nightline" in November to give a tantalizing preview of his decision ("I'm not certain at all that the death penalty can be constitutionally imposed; I haven't taken that position yet, but I am getting close to it"), it was the same impulse that led him to draft a peculiar eight-page press release to accompany the release of *Roe* v. *Wade*: "I fear what the headlines may be, but it should be stressed that the Court does not today hold that the Constitution compels abortion on demand." William Brennan talked him out of the press release in *Roe*. But the *Callins* opinion reads like a press release of its own; and its melodramatic rhetoric—"I shall no longer tinker with the machinery of death"—is addressed not to Blackmun's colleagues, but to the largely unheeding public at large.

Blackmun began the *Callins* dissent by emotionally describing the death of a convicted murderer by lethal injection: "The witnesses, standing a few feet away, will behold Callins, no longer a defendant, an appellant or a petitioner, but a man, strapped to a gurney, and seconds away from extinction." But surely the relative brutality or benevolence of the execution in question should be irrelevant to the constitutional issue: Is the death penalty unconstitutional in all circumstances? When Nina Totenberg of National Public Radio asked Blackmun, "Have you ever cried over these cases?" ("Figuratively, yes, but not actually," Blackmun replied), the question was more appropriate than it sounded. For it responded to the sentimentality that Blackmun himself had invited.

When the moment arrived, however, Blackmun could not seem to make up his mind about the constitutional basis for his decision. In his "Nightline" interview he said he had "difficulty" with William Brennan's and Thurgood Marshall's notion that the death penalty always and everywhere violates the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. The text of the Constitution allows capital punishment, Blackmun noted appropriately, and "the American people are in favor of it." Instead, Blackmun said he had been more influenced by the argument that the death penalty, as administered, is not administered evenhandedly: "I think it comes close to violating the equal protection clause of the Constitution," he said, because more blacks are executed than whites.

But in his *Callins* opinion, Blackmun took a different approach. With only a passing reference to the possibility of racial discrimination, he announced that because two strands of the Court's Eighth Amendment jurisprudence seemed to be in conflict—the decision to impose death must be closely confined, but the decision to extend mercy must be unlimited—he had concluded that the death penalty is cruel and unusual in all circumstances. The logical leap is mystifying. The Court itself devised the rules for administering the death penalty; and if they are in conflict with each other, the sensible solution would be to revise them, or, at most, to conclude that the death penalty, as it is currently applied, violates some notion of due process of law. Blackmun never explained how he moved from the view that the death penalty is not administered rationally to the view that it is, always and everywhere, cruel or unusual.

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And then there is *Roe* v. *Wade*. Blackmun's justification for *Roe* on the day that he resigned ("a step that had to be taken as we go down the road toward the full emancipation of women") is ironically at odds with his romantic obsession, in the original opinion, with the professional interests of licensed physicians. Blackmun never forgave Ginsburg for criticizing the scope of *Roe* in the 1980s: he peevishly refused to interview her law clerks for his own clerkships and, according to several intimates, was less than elated by her nomination last year. And although he eventually came around to Ginsburg's emphasis on gender equality rather than the right to privacy, he could never bring himself to defend the equality position in a legally intelligible way: in the *Casey* decision it was the mushy moderate justices, not Blackmun, who emphasized "the ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the nation." Blackmun said frequently, "I think it was right in 1973 and it's right today." But he never managed to explain *why* it was right in a way that satisfied basic standards of legal craftsmanship.

Why should liberals care if Blackmun was an indecisive, unsophisticated craftsman, unconcerned about dressing up his humane impulses in legal reasoning? "I'd rather have Blackmun, who uses the wrong reasoning in *Roe* to get to the right results, and let other people figure out the right reasoning," says Harold Koh of Yale, a former Blackmun clerk. "And on the personalization point, he's being honest in a way that other people aren't. He sees something that really offends him, and if it offends him, he doesn't censor himself." Blackmun does indeed deserve points for candor; and his approach has a transparency that more subtle justices, like William Brennan, took care to conceal. Nevertheless, his example is dangerous for liberals on several levels.

There is the danger, first of all, of sentimentalism on the right. Conservatives are no less prone to sentimentality than liberals; but when they exalt their own sensibilities over the Bill of Rights, the results tend to look less benign. Chief Justice William Rehnquist's dissent in the 1989 flag burning case is an unsettling example. Flag burning, he said, should be illegal because it offends him; and instead of making a coolheaded legal argument, he quoted at length from "Barbara Frietchie," a saccharine patriotic air.

It is also difficult, as Blackmun shows, for a legally unsophisticated justice to influence the terms of debate on the Court. Some of Blackmun's opinions are eloquent and convincing, and others are wooden and pedestrian, depending in large part on the quality of the clerks. (His best work was in tax and commercial speech cases.) But because Blackmun himself was not nimble enough to make the strongest arguments on his own, at oral argument and at conference, he consistently failed to articulate positions that might have won over the justices in the middle. In the 1990 peyote case, for example, Blackmun failed to take Antonin Scalia to task for ignoring text, history and precedent when he claimed that the First Amendment didn't require exemptions for religious minorities. Instead, Blackmun wrote a sentimental paean to the "unfulfilled and hollow promise of religious tolerance for Native Americans." Two years later, in the *Weisman* graduation prayer case, Blackmun refused to join David Souter's concurrence that meticulously laid out the historical challenge to Scalia's peyote opinion. Instead, he resorted to platitudes about the separation of church and state. And in the *Zobrest* case last June, where both the law *and* the equities should have led him to favor a deaf boy in a parochial school who wanted a sign language interpreter, Blackmun preferred to indulge in wooden anticlericalism.

There is something lawless, finally, about the notion that warmhearted impulses are more important than legal reasoning. The most basic requirement of the rule of law, as Judge Richard Posner argues, is that judges must be impartial, that they can't decide even close cases on the basis of their personal sympathy for one party or another. Some of Blackmun's opinions, however, gave the impression of being based on nothing more than sympathy. Consider his most purple opinion, "Poor Joshua!," which President Clinton quoted approvingly when accepting his resignation. No one denied that the facts were tragic; the question was whether county officials deprived 4-year-old Joshua of a constitutionally protected liberty when they stood by as his father brutally abused him. In rejecting the claim, Rehnquist made a plausible distinction between negative and positive liberty. William Brennan wrote a competent dissent arguing that the county caseworkers assumed a duty to help Joshua when they agreed to supervise his case. But Blackmun merely lamented the personal tragedy: "Poor Joshua! Victim of repeated attacks by an irresponsible, bullying, cowardly and intemperate father.... [This] is a sad commentary on American life, and constitutional principles." Since Blackmun failed to elaborate *why* he thought constitutional principles were violated, it was hard to avoid the impression that he was moved by sympathy alone.

Harry Blackmun is an earnest and sincere man, but the liberal lionization of him is cynical and ultimately distressing, for it encourages the conservative charge that liberals are concerned only about results rather than reasons. If Blackmun, over the course of a quarter-century, was unable to articulate a convincing rationale for striking down the death penalty, or for invalidating abortion laws, then it seems fair to conclude that his decisions were unprincipled. And by missing the best arguments in other cases, he allowed similarly disingenuous conservative claims to pass without the challenge they deserved. Blackmun shows, in the end, that a big heart and the capacity to feel pain are not enough for success on the Supreme Court. Liberals need an intellectually sophisticated craftsman—not for aesthetic reasons, but because the alternative is a Court that governs by impulse rather than argument, by emotion rather than law. •

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South Africa stumbles toward democracy.

THE BLOODIED COUNTRY

By Charles Lane

It is around midnight, Easter Sunday. In the emergency room of Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital "casualties" have been mounting for hours. One after another, bleeding young black men and women from the township are wheeled in, unconscious from their injuries and their drinking. Most of the victims have ugly stab wounds in the back or neck. There's one youth with the telltale slice of a *panga*—the machetelike knife Zulus carry as a "cultural weapon"—across the crown of his head. Many of tonight's victims exhibit scars from previous trauma. Doctors call the ward "the pit." An American friend of mine who lives in Johannesburg calls it "an assembly line." Neither quite captures the sickening, yet businesslike, atmosphere in the only public emergency room serving Soweto's more than 3 million citizens.

"Hey, take a look at this," says Dr. Siego Wouters, a good-natured 35-year-old from the Netherlands who, like the many other foreign physicians here, came to "Bara" for an intensive dose of experience in trauma medicine—even if it means some must work armed for self-protection. The hospital welcomes them to replace South African doctors fleeing the country. Dr. Wouters thought he had seen it all, but Peter Mkezi, 18, presents a novel condition: shot twice in the genitals and still alive to tell about it. Peter, too, is a repeat customer. His left hand is partly paralyzed from a prior stabbing. "We were gambling, and he tried to take my money," Peter says of tonight's attack. "Then he shot me with a handgun."

Most of the attacks that land people in Bara seem like that—spontaneous, anomic. "To us, it's a kind of ritual, you either get stabbed or arrested, all these traumatic things that give a family sleepless nights," says Ntsieng Lenong, a 29-year-old community organizer in Soweto. Not even Ntsieng—educated, law-abiding, dedicated to improving the lot of his people—has been able to insulate himself. I met him as doctors treated his friend for a stab wound. He himself was once stabbed in the chest. Seven months ago his brother was murdered trying to prevent a man from beating up a woman. The assailant was arrested and released the same day; he has never been brought to trial. Ntsieng now carries a gun because he has been threatened by the man. "We have a lot of teen pregnancy here," Ntsieng says. "People say, when one person goes, 'Don't worry, we'll get another.' To a lot of people here, life is cheap."

None of the cases I saw at Baragwanath was caused by the political violence shadowing South Africa's first all-race national elections at the end of April. Horrific as the political toll is—more than 15,000 killed in the last four years—the vast majority of violence is criminal. The local news during my visit was dominated by the hunt for "The Station Strangler," who murdered twenty-one boys in the "colored" townships outside of Cape Town. In fact, on a per capita basis, South Africa's murder rate is ten times that of the United States. You can buy an AK-47 on the black market in Soweto for 50 Rand—about $15. Several residents told me you can order a "hit" for the same price. The casualties in Bara are casualties of war, all right—the war of all against all.

Yet South Africa's gory tableau of nonpolitical violence forms the necessary backdrop against which to analyze the political kind. Black-on-black violence is, in one sense, nothing more than a cruel legacy of the apartheid system—the predictable result of forced expulsions of blacks from traditional lands, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and abusive policing. In a more basic sense, however, the violence stems from a vacuum of legitimate authority. The vacuum is a result of apartheid, which, for blacks, left the very concept of public order discredited. But it is also a product of the struggle against apartheid. The African National Congress (ANC) battled the police and their informers for years in a largely successful campaign to make the townships "ungovernable." The struggle excused a multitude of sins, including the operations of local warlords and organized crime figures, and the mutation of some ANC "comrades" themselves into warlords and crooks.

An irony of the current situation in South Africa, then, is that the construction of a legitimate new order is in the hands of two parties that did so much, intentionally or unintentionally, to destroy the legitimacy of the old order: the Afrikaner-dominated National Party of outgoing president F.W. de Klerk, and the ANC of president-in-waiting Nelson Mandela.

Another irony is that these two organizations played a role in creating the most important political force attempting to disrupt the effort for a new South Africa:

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Chief Mangosuthu "Gatsha" Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Zulu-based group that is boycotting the election and demanding an autonomous Zulu state in Natal province. Inkatha was initially formed in 1975 as a Zulu cultural organization, operating with the ANC's blessing and in the ANC's interests while the latter organization was banned. Gradually, however, Buthelezi moved closer to the National Party, which provided him with money, weapons and a Zulu "homeland" in Natal—KwaZulu. Even as he forged his own network of warlords, thugs and *indunas* (a Zulu word meaning, roughly, "ward boss") in Natal, Buthelezi became South Africa's Great White Hope abroad, the "moderate" alternative to the ANC. When the ANC's United Democratic Front moved in on Buthelezi's turf in the '80s, the war in Natal began.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission has said "free and fair" elections are impossible in KwaZulu. KwaZulu, an archipelago of territories splotched across the map of Natal, is fast becoming as Hobbesian as Bosnia. At dawn one morning (the best time of day to examine the results of the previous night's fighting, because the combatants take a rest) I visited KwaMashu, a sprawl of concrete houses and cardboard shacks just north of Durban. The township has seen some of the heaviest fighting between Inkatha and the ANC over the last month. Before this cool dawn had finally come the comrades of KwaMashu's Section K had spent the whole night fending off the *impis* ("warriors") of Inkatha. Time and again, the two sides massed and charged at each other with everything from sticks to *pangas*. Spent shell casings from semiautomatic weapons litter the ground.

A woman hurries by, carrying a table on her head and a baby on her back. She is joining thousands of others made into refugees by the fighting. A wiry, unshaven man emerges from a hiding place. He pokes through the smoldering remains of a shack, but there's not much left other than cinders. I ask him what happened. "Plenty of people came from over there," he says, pointing in the direction of Inkatha's turf. Fortunately, he wasn't home at the time. "I sleep in the bush," he explains. "I can't sleep in the house. Inkatha is coming." I ask his name. He freezes with fear, then flees. The sun rises higher in the sky, bathing the little homes in a soft red light. The glow illuminates charred interiors: every dwelling on this hilltop, astride ANC and Inkatha territory, has been gutted by fire and abandoned.

A short distance away a crowd of *impis* brandishes sticks and clubs. Their eyes are still bloodshot from the night before. They say the mayhem in KwaMashu is not Inkatha's fault, despite obvious signs that the latest upsurge is being orchestrated through *indunas* by Buthelezi. Still, the men make no effort to disguise their belligerent disdain for a vote most other people in South Africa see as a decisive step toward the liberation of the black majority and the democratization of the country. "We got these houses from the Inkatha Freedom Party," says "Spiwe," a 34-year-old *induna* wearing a cowboy hat. "We got to settle here because of the IFP. Some people who don't work get fed by the IFP. We get everything from the IFP. We will never reject it. The ANC stands for its own needs. But we are the Zulu nation. We don't want elections. We want to remain independent." He points down the hill at a crowd of ANC "comrades" no more than 200 yards away. "We are just sitting here having a look at them," he protests. "And they are shooting at us. What is the reason for that?"

Across a landscape of burned tree limbs and overturned oil drums, the comrades, too, proclaim their innocence. Their apparent leader, "Abdul," 26, complains that the comrades would like to go to work but are pinned down by sniper fire from the *impis*—exactly what the *impis* had just said about the comrades. "They are trying to block the way to elections," Abdul says. "It is not that they are the Zulu nation. I am a Zulu. But the ANC goes according to what is right for the whole world. The police are giving the *impis* a big helping hand. Half

continued on page 24

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Top: John Todd, Sheila Skillman. Bottom: T.J. Seibert, Jay Skalka.

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the time they instigate the other side. We are going to vote, even if it ends up like Mozambique." Yet here, too, the joy that should have greeted the advent of black empowerment seems to have dissipated amid the atmosphere of anger. I ask Abdul if he really thinks the voting is a moment of liberation for the black people of the country. "It might be worse," he replies, seemingly nonplussed by the question. "It might be calm. Or maybe, I might be dead before that time."

What does Buthelezi want? The chief's recent speeches—rambling, angry tirades full of threats of "struggle to the finish" with the ANC—revolve around a basic theme: his anger at being left out of the constitutional pact struck between two parties he is accustomed to dealing with on a more or less equal footing, and for whom he has carried much water in the past. Buthelezi has a point: it would have been better, in hindsight, if all constitutional disputes had been settled before an election date was fixed.

Yet the National Party and the ANC have little choice, and good reason, to resist these arguments. They represent the vast majority of white and black South Africans; they are the center without which the new South Africa cannot hold. The goal of democratization is a nonracial South African polity, as little poisoned as possible by tribalism, the curse of Africa. Conceding Buthelezi's demand for a Zulu state would open the door to similar demands by right-wing Afrikaners and possibly other black groups as well. Besides, polls show that a majority of the Zulus in Natal would vote for the ANC, not Buthelezi. So he has abandoned his past professions of deep democratic vocation and is playing his last card: violence. In this effort he has shamelessly cast his lot with ultraright whites. A so-called Third Force made up of senior white police officials and assorted white freebooters has provided weapons, training and money to Inkatha's forces.

The threat of terror from white extremists is real and probably will be for years. But generally speaking, the white right is weak, divided and confused. The number of Afrikaners who want to resist a "new South Africa" is probably no more than a million—approximately the number who voted "no" in de Klerk's whites-only referendum on reform two years ago. And this minority within a minority can't agree on a strategy. Some, like the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement, advocate civil war. But these weekend warriors have been thoroughly demoralized by their recent experience in Bophuthatswana. White paramilitary forces came to the rescue of homeland president Joseph Mangope, an operation that consisted mainly of firing randomly at black people. That led to a televised incident in which black police executed two wounded Afrikaner fighters as they begged for their lives. The survivors, exposed as the pathetic racists they are, had to be escorted home by the South African Defense Forces (SADF), which arrived to take control of the homeland. The Freedom Front, led by a popular former general, Constand Viljoen, subsequently broke with the ultras and decided to participate in the election. Its goal is to negotiate a measure of Afrikaner autonomy after the vote.

In electoral terms, the most important phenomenon among whites is last-minute jitters. In supermarkets in white suburbs, canned goods, flashlight batteries and other staples are being snapped up in panic buying: rumors of a post-election looting spree by blacks have swept the white community. Some suburbanites are even preparing to use the contents of their swimming pools as emergency drinking water.

The majority of whites are resigned to the coming revolution. A significant minority welcomes it. But many are deeply frightened. For many whites (and blacks, too), March 28, Bloody Monday, was a post-apartheid nightmare come true. On that day violence erupted during a march of 20,000 pro-Inkatha Zulus through Johannesburg. Fifty-three people died. Several were killed by the Zulu marchers. The majority, however, were Zulus killed in a shoot-out begun by the ANC. The ANC claims that the Zulu royalists, armed with cultural weapons—spears, clubs and sticks—as well as guns, were trying to storm its headquarters. Though it is true that the rally was poorly policed and highly provocative, neutral witnesses say the ANC opened fire without being attacked. In a display of raw political self-interest that dismayed even some ANC supporters, Mandela refused to let the police search the ANC building after the fight.

Horrified, Sholto and Colette Hellman watched the melee from the eighteenth-floor offices of Sholto's law practice. The Hellmans, members of South Africa's large and politically active Jewish community, have always opposed apartheid, working and voting for the old white liberal party led by Helen Suzman. Sholto, a family law specialist, represents battered women from Soweto seeking divorces under the laws of their respective tribes. His father, Henry, gave Nelson Mandela his first job as a law clerk. The Hellmans still drop "Nelson's" name proudly in conversation. Yet crime and violence, plus what they see as the unrealistic economic promises of the ANC, are shaking the couple's confidence. "I always said I would rather cut off my right hand than vote National Party," Colette says. "But I came close to it this time."

Their daughter, Andrea, 23, will join her brother Saul, a 28-year-old doctor, in England during the election. The parents regard this as a safety measure. It is sobering to realize that these highly intelligent, proudly anti-racist children of white liberals are possibly more conservative than their parents. Colette says that Saul, after a training stint in Bara during which hospital workers staged a violent strike, "must be a Conservative Party voter by now." Andrea, who once leaned ANC, is thinking of voting for de Klerk.

For Andrea, the watershed experience came during her senior year as an international affairs student at Witwatersrand University. An ANC-aligned student organization went on a protest rampage, assaulting teachers and setting off firebombs in some classrooms. They were demanding an end to fees and lowered admission

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standards for blacks. Now Andrea frets that "the victim is going to be the oppressor and the oppressor the victim." At the stationery store where she works as a night manager, the same gang of armed shoplifters comes regularly every two weeks to clean out the shelves. "Don't report us," they say. "We know where you live." Sometimes, she visualizes a vivid scenario in which she faces black gunmen trying to hijack her car. "I'd drive the car into a wall," she says. "I'd rather die that way than have my head blown off."

Andrea's fears find a faint, yet unmistakable, parallel in the experience of 23-year-old Ntsoaki Mohapi and her family in Soweto. Like the Hellmans, the Mohapis are middle-class people who opposed apartheid actively. Ntsoaki's mother, Betty Mohapi, a community leader who works as a nurse at Bara, speaks passionately and movingly of her support for the student strikes against the inferior educational system imposed by "the Boers." The Mohapis, too, have a Mandela connection: Ntsoaki, a former international relations student at Emmanuel College in Boston, worked in the ANC leader's entourage during his first visit to the United States. The Mohapis' home is almost identical to the one occupied by the Hellmans in their white Johannesburg suburb—during the years of apartheid Ntsoaki's father, Josiah, carved out a home construction business in Soweto. The advent of government by the ANC, which has promised to build a million new homes for blacks, could be a boon to his company.

For both personal and political reasons, all the Mohapis will probably vote ANC. Yet Josiah Mohapi's company pick-up truck was recently hijacked at gunpoint; he narrowly escaped with his life. Betty Mohapi complains of underfunding and chaos at Bara, where political battles sometimes spill over into the wards. The parents don't want Ntsoaki going out at night, in spite of the fact that she, like several of her black middle-class friends, has moved into a relatively safe, formerly all-white suburb. At some point, she wants to return to the United States for more study.

For all their enthusiasm toward the prospect of a black government, the incessant violence tempers what should be a moment of triumph. So, too, has the evident mismatch between the ANC's promises and the country's economic capacity to deliver. "The ANC has the theoretical background," Josiah Mohapi says. "But it doesn't have any functional experience." I pointed out to him that I had heard similar expressions of fear about crime from the white Hellmans. "It's the common denominator," he conceded.

Many in the ANC believe that Inkatha is little more than a creature of the white-right Third Force. Mandela himself has fed this mood by denying "biased" police access to the Bloody Monday scene and by labeling de Klerk "a political criminal" because of Inkatha's war. But Buthelezi also draws on Zulu myth and tradition to fashion a critical mass of support. The most important symbol is the Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelethini, who happens to be Buthelezi's nephew. The king, cultural weapons and the ancient name of KwaZulu still arouse militant loyalty in Zulus who live under traditional tribal authorities—or among urban Zulus who see tradition as an antidote to the chaos of the townships.

Ulundi, site of KwaZulu's capital, is the Zulu Kosovo: on the fourth of July, 1879, a force of 4,165 British troops and 1,152 African allies defeated 20,000 Zulus. The British side suffered only thirteen killed. A monument on the site commemorates "the brave warriors who fell here in 1879 in defense of the old Zulu order." Ever since, some Zulus have dreamed of restoring the Natal empire built by Shaka Zulu. To such people, the end of whites-only government heralds not liberation but apocalypse at the hands of the ANC, which they regard as dominated by the rival Xhosa tribe.

In Ulundi, I attend a wake for a 32-year-old part-time delivery truck driver named Rafael Veli. Candles flicker in a corner of his two room house. Two-dozen women dressed in black dresses, wide white collars and leopard-skin fezlike hats sit cross-legged on the floor. They rock back and forth, singing funeral hymns in Zulu, filling the air with haunting harmony. A minister rises from a rough wooden bench and leads the group in the Lord's Prayer, also in Zulu.

Rafael Veli spent the last few years of his life far from his home town, living as a migrant laborer in the Nancefield hostel, a grim collection of brick structures in Soweto. Veli's family insists he was a peaceful man, but Nancefield houses some of Inkatha's most violent *impis*. Whether or not he lived peacefully, Veli died violently, gunned down outside ANC headquarters on Bloody Monday. Just as Bloody Monday frightened many whites, it tapped into the currents of victimization that feed Zulu nationalism. In Buthelezi's telling, it was a slaughter of the innocents, a latter-day Battle of Ulundi, complete with the shields and spears of the warriors lying broken on the field. Rafael Veli is a hero to his family, a loyal subject who died for his king, and who should be avenged. "We are driving toward a river of blood," says Veli's brother, Cmbangayiya, who belongs to Buthelezi's notorious KwaZulu police force. "God will help us if we help ourselves."

The last hopes for a settlement in Natal seem to have been extinguished by Bloody Monday. Shortly after my visit to KwaMashu, a delegation of nine ANC members from the township went to a prearranged peace parley with Inkatha fighters at an Inkatha-controlled hostel. It was a double cross. The ANC men were thrown in a van, driven to a railway station and shot in their heads by a crowd of *impis* screaming for revenge for Bloody Monday. De Klerk has sent the SADF to Natal in a desperate bid to establish order. But more than 100 more people have been killed since the army moved in. A summit meeting among de Klerk, Mandela, Buthelezi and the Zulu king produced nothing but recriminations. "There is all probability that all-out war will take place unless a miracle occurs," says Chief Simon Gumede, a former Buthelezi lieutenant who broke with him over the latter's boycott of the election. "And of course, if

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there were miracles, people wouldn't be dying today."

Mandela is under enormous pressure from within the ranks of the ANC to quit humoring Buthelezi and crush him militarily. After all, for many comrades Inkatha is nothing more than the enemy in a bitter war stirred up by the whites. Their model is the takeover of the Bophuthatswana homeland by the SADF, of which Mandela will become commander in chief after the elections. Indeed, the SADF, once rightly denounced by the ANC as an instrument of apartheid, has become something of a deus ex machina in the Congress's political script.

Yet it is the SADF itself that has best demonstrated the folly of adopting a partisan political-military course. The army's Afrikaner-dominated professional officers face a delicate future under black rule. If the army divides along racial or political lines—the majority of its officers and commando reservists are conservative whites, the majority of its enlisted troops are black—it would lead to civil war. If, however, the officers hold the army together, successfully integrating former members of the ANC's armed wing and developing a relevant mission in the post-apartheid world, their own careers and pensions will be secure. Thus, the watchword of the SADF today is nonpartisan professionalism.

I witnessed the importance of this in the East Rand, a vast sprawl of townships housing 1.8 million people about twenty miles from Johannesburg. In 1993 the East Rand was even more violent than Natal: about fifty people a week were being killed in battles between the comrades, most of whom were Xhosas, and the *impis*, who are mostly Zulus. The "War Zone" between ANC and Inkatha territory, a large area of neat middle-class homes, each of which cost its owner approximately $20,000, was destroyed, looted and abandoned in the conflict. The police, regarded correctly by the ANC as sympathetic to Inkatha, had been routed. Joe Slovo, the Communist ANC leader, came under fire himself on a campaign visit to the area.

That was the last straw. On February 2, with the ANC's blessing and over Inkatha's protests, de Klerk withdrew the police from the East Rand and sent in the army. The result has been a near-total cessation of the violence. Some of this must be due to the ANC's decision to call off the fight now that it has gotten its way: the Congress, whose slogan was once "no soldiers in the townships," actually staged welcoming demonstrations when the armored vehicles rolled in to the East Rand. But the army also deserves credit for pursuing an intelligent strategy. Its "Operation Protecto" derived from counterinsurgency doctrine developed during South Africa's wars in Namibia and Angola. It called for the army to pour a division of troops into the area to search out weapons and suppress the fighting, then follow up with dispute resolution and public works projects to restore services destroyed by the fighting.

The rich irony of the situation—an Afrikaner-led organization seeking to be the one force that can bring peace to warring African factions—is lost on no one. But after talking to both ANC and Inkatha residents in the East Rand, my impression was that, while the two groups still expressed hatred for each other, the army had won respect as an honest broker. On the ground, the opinion of Inkatha cadres seemed to differ from the anti-army stance of the Inkatha leadership. Amos, a 36-year-old resident of the Inkatha-controlled New Crossroads squatter camp, doffs his cap to reveal a huge *panga* scar across his scalp. He sings the army's praises. "Now we can sleep peacefully," he says.

The SADF's performance in the East Rand probably won't be repeated in Natal: the army just doesn't have enough troops to cover a province that encompasses one-quarter of the country's population. And it doesn't have enough time before the election to develop a plan in Natal as comprehensive as the one in the East Rand. Operation Protecto itself is scheduled to end soon. The National Peacekeeping Force, a ragged 3,000-man force consisting largely of former ANC armed cadres, will move into the East Rand, albeit under the SADF's direction.

However impermanent, the army's operation in the East Rand did demonstrate basic principles the new government would do well to follow in pacifying the country: highly visible strength, no-nonsense law enforcement tempered by negotiation and, above all, impartiality. The ANC could have advantages in such an effort: its support from the majority of voters, its nonracial ideology. But it must transcend major deficiencies: the rabid anti-Inkatha sentiment within its own ranks, its relations of mutual suspicion with the police and Buthelezi's own apparent determination to fight on after the elections.

The new government will probably have no choice but to use force against Buthelezi and the residual white right-wingers. But if it wishes to avoid permanent instability, the ANC must recognize that many traditional Zulus and Afrikaners—as opposed to their opportunistic chiefs—have real insecurities and have drawn attention to real weaknesses in the new order. It must deal with these in ways that enhance, rather than erode, the legitimacy of the new state. It won't be easy.

But South Africa needs legitimate, nonracial, nontribal authority more than anything else—black empowerment and economic growth included—to quell the violence. Such authority is the only thing that can keep the confidence of the Hellmans and Mohapis, who want to make a new South Africa work, but are afraid that criminals will steal the fruits of their efforts. True democratic political legitimacy has never before existed in racist, war-torn South Africa. Its establishment would be the crowning achievement of the liberation struggle.

At Bara, Dr. Siego Wouters knows what the alternative is. Toward the end of my visit I notice him talking with a smiling young man who only hours ago had lain semiconscious and bleeding from a triple stab wound. I ask if the patient had come by to say thanks. Dr. Wouters replies: "No, he just told me he's going out again tomorrow to get revenge on the guy who did this to him." •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Breaches of Promise

Suppose you were invited to see a film directed by Bille August, the Dane who made *Pelle the Conqueror* and *The Best Intentions*, with a screenplay that he had adapted from a successful novel. Suppose the cast included Jeremy Irons, Meryl Streep, Vanessa Redgrave, Glenn Close and Armin Mueller-Stahl. Would it be unreasonable to expect some display of intelligence and talent, also—basically, not additionally—some entertainment?

All these suppositions are quickly quashed in **The House of the Spirits** (Miramax). I haven't read Isabel Allende's novel (and never shall), but it's clearly a long, lurid chronicle of a Latin American family (kin to *Like Water for Chocolate*), full of dynastic clatter. The screen version, though it runs 132 minutes, is a compression-chamber squish, close in effect to that old cabaret-sketch gag, *War and Peace* or *Crime and Punishment* in sixty seconds flat. No character is interesting, and most are only silhouettes. All story developments are either obviously planted, like the revenge of a bastard son, or speedily slapped in, like a car smash at a railroad crossing.

In an unnamed Latin country we follow—in fact, we can hardly keep up with—the rise of the ambitious young Esteban, from poverty to riches to rightist political sway, from strenuous youth to domineering age, during which course he philanders, marries, begets, toughens and at last (O frabjous day!) acquires a touch of humanity.

The perfunctory touching of all the plot bases is worsened by the perfunctory acting. On this score the bad news comes fast: as the film begins, we hear the ninny voice of Winona Ryder. She is our sound track guide through the generations until, as Esteban's granddaughter, she appears on screen and we can meet the presence that matches the inane voice.

The bad news about the acting is darkened with the first glimpse of Irons as Esteban, in dark curly wig, swarthy makeup and stoked-up Latin heat. Can this be the Irons of subtlety and range and true fire? Are there too many Ironses in too many fires? He starts falsely and gets falser: his aged Esteban, crusty and stiff, is a composite of all the clichés of old-man roles.

Close, as Esteban's spinster sister, does better—at least she's luckier. Except for a few outbursts, she has a relatively monochrome role, frigid, and frigidity isn't hard for her. Streep, at the start of her role, has to look like a girl: this was brave of her. But she is photographed badly throughout, even when the woman reaches middle age. Her performance is negligible, anyway, as is that of Mueller-Stahl in the brief role of her father. Redgrave lets us glimpse her triumphant beauty as Streep's mother, and the Spanish actor Antonio Banderas is tolerable as Ryder's politically radical lover.

This was August's first work outside Scandinavia. Written large, if invisibly, across the screen is the injunction, "August go home!" He needs to work where he understands what he's doing and really wants to do it. He seems to have been so bewildered by the change of venue, so swept up in big-budget tempests, that he lost all control, all *self*. Jörgen Persson, who did such superb cinematography for him earlier, here settles for as many tired clichés of framing and color as Irons uses in his acting.

Rarely does a picture with such a promising list of names turn out to be such a misery.

Barry Levinson is a spendthrift. He acquired a large store of goodwill with his first film, *Diner*, and in varying measure he increased it with *The Natural*, *Tin Men*, *Rain Man*, even the somewhat fumbled *Avalon*. Then Levinson began to squander the goodwill with *Toys*, a project that he had long cherished and should long ago have forgotten. Now there's **Jimmy Hollywood** (Paramount). I don't know how long Levinson has been cherishing this idea, but it's costing him more of his goodwill account.

It's easy—or easier—to understand how producers might persuade themselves that *The House of the Spirits* was worth doing, because it was based on an international best-seller and could be star-studded; but who in the world thought that Levinson's screenplay should be green-lighted? Some bigwigs at Paramount, that's who. The setting is Movieland. The story begins as the portrait of a would-be film star, bedraggled and worn but still hoping. (We haven't had one of those since last month.) Through some accidents the actor becomes a kind of vigilante-hero in

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Four Weddings and a Funeral. *A bright British comedy-romance, with Hugh Grant as the frothy hero and Andie MacDowell, a touch heavier, as the American woman he wants. (Reviewed 4/4/94)* **The Paper.** *Old wine in a pretty good new bottle. A swift, slam-bang newspaper comedy-drama, with the usual sentiment under the grit. Michael Keaton whirls, as an editor, under Ron Howard's steady hand. (4/18/94)* **Schindler's List.** *Don't let the Oscar-night pap and the bellowing ads dissuade you. Steven Spielberg's film about the Nazi who saved Jewish lives is stark, monumental. (12/13/93 and 1/24/94)* **Thirty-Two Short Films about Glenn Gould.** *With the Goldberg Variations as model, François Girard presents a "documentary" about the pianist's life. Original, intelligent, fascinating. (4/25/94)* **—SK**

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crime-ridden L.A., hailed in the press and on T.V., and he considers it the role of his life. Complications, as complications will, follow.

Buried in this painfully slow and surprisingly obtuse screenplay is the ghost of a good idea: an actor who can't get acting jobs but finds a part to perform in life that uses all he has to give. The idea even has (forgive me, Luigi) a faint Pirandellian tinge. But Levinson's use of it is so clumsy, so grotesque, that it becomes only a tired, wacky plot device.

However, Joe Pesci, as the actor, has a certain grind-along comic energy and, in a flowing, dyed-blond wig, he attacks the role as if it could be conquered. One of those high-school-film stars, Christian Slater, plays Pesci's sidekick, who is dimwitted. As such, Slater is credible. The most noteworthy point in the picture—irritating, as well—is a coincidence.

Banderas, who is in the August film, came to marked international attention in Almodóvar's *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* In Levinson's film Pesci's Latino girlfriend is played by Victoria Abril, who was Banderas's co-star in the Almodóvar film. Banderas doesn't come off too dismally under August; but, in this Levinson ragout, where is the charming, spirited, sexy and very funny Abril? One or two moments excepted, her American debut is dreary and commonplace—and unbelievable. Why would this woman have clung to Pesci?

Levinson, whose directing here is banal, is making it hard for us to keep on hoping for him. Maybe his next picture will help us out. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

P.C.—or Not P.C.

The most cogent commentators on our stormy times have unquestionably been not the columnists but the cartoonists, which is another way of noting that representational satire has more capacity than political commentary to relieve the pressures of a fractious age. On stage two inspired performers have recently been offering their own perspectives on the issues that divide us, and while the African American Anna Deavere Smith and the Jewish Jackie Mason seem worlds apart in tone, attitude, focus and ethnicity, they each provide more perspective on the nature of our discords than an army of op-ed pundits.

It is true that Smith might be more accurately described as a sociologist than as a satirist. Both in her previous *Fires in the Mirror*, which covered the Crown Heights affair, and in her current piece at the Joseph Papp Public Theater, **Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992**, which deals with the riots in South-Central L.A., she has drawn her material from interviews with the actual participants in those events. Still, Smith is not only an objective ear but a characterizing voice, and just as she shapes her text through editing and selection, so she achieves her emphasis through gesture and intonation. During the course of the evening the actress impersonates forty-six different people, capturing the essence of each character less through mimetic transformation, like an actor, than through the caricaturist's body English and vocal embellishments. Just look at her photographs: you'd never guess from any of those contorted head shots that she's an extremely handsome young woman.

Smith's subjects divide essentially into victims, victimizers and viewers, though it is sometimes difficult to determine which is which. If the former L.A. Police Chief Daryl Gates (defending himself against charges that he permitted the riots to rage while attending a fund-raiser) and Sergeant Charles Duke (complaining that Officer Lawrence Powell was "weak and inefficient with the baton" because he wasn't allowed to use the "choke-hold") are clearly the patsies of the piece, the rioters, looters, gang members and assailants often appear more sinned against than sinning. A white juror in the first Rodney King trial—asked by a reporter, "Why are you hiding your heads in shame?"—is appalled to receive approving calls from the KKK. Keith Watson, one of those acquitted of beating Reginald Denny, justifies his rage and the burned-out vacant lots by saying "justice didn't work," while Paul Parker, chairperson of the Free the L.A. Four Defense Committee, charges "You kidnapped us, you raped our women . . . you expect us to feel something for the white boy?" One gringo-hating Latino, ranting against the "peckerwoods" and "rednecks" who have persecuted his family, expresses pleasure in the way Mexicans are able to terrify whites. Another Latino

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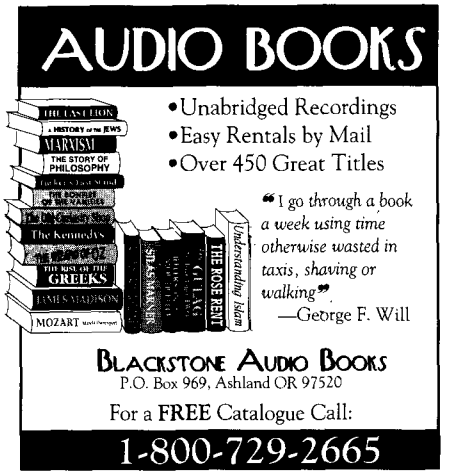
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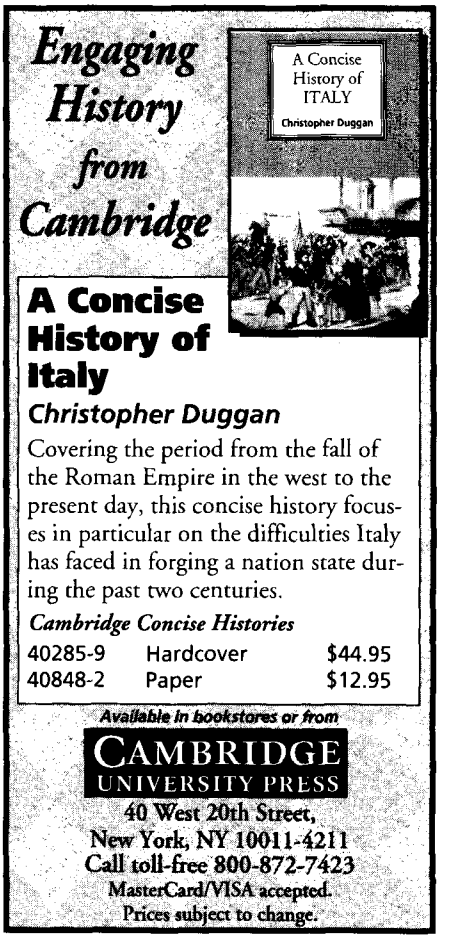
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is encouraged by a policeman to "go for it, it's your neighborhood." A black woman "touring" in the white neighborhood loots I. Magnin because she finds it "very offensive" that rich stars should feel protected from rioting.

Then there are the other victims: the Asian shopkeepers who, in those tumultuous days, lost 90 percent of their stores and a number of their family members. At the same time that a spokesperson for a young black girl shot by a Korean shopkeeper (who was acquitted) is raging against Asians, Mrs. Young-Soon Han, a former liquor store owner, speaks of her disenchantment with blacks. There were none in the Hollywood movies she saw in Korea; she thought this country was the best. Now "they" have destroyed the shops of innocent merchants simply because "we have a car and a house.... Where do I find justice? What about victims' rights?" Another store owner, inveighing against shoplifting and looting, remarks, "After that, I really hate this country, I really hate—we are not like customer and owner but more like *enemy*."

"Enemy" and "hate" are the operative words of *Twilight*. With each ethnic group bristling at the other, one might think "cultural diversity" had become a euphemism for race war. A Mexican woman reporter, told her life is in danger, replies: "How could they think I was white?" The African American Parker boasts how "we burnt down the Koreans—they are like the Jews in this neighborhood." And this is countered not by appeals for tolerance but by counsels of caution, like those of Elaine Brown, former Black Panther, reminding the gun-brandishing, swashbuckling looters about America's willingness to use its power: "Ask Saddam Hussein."

To judge by the interviews in *Twilight*, however, the Los Angeles riots caused a lot of soul-searching, and considerable guilt, among some white Americans. The experience certainly stimulated considerable generosity from Denny, who, pleading for recognition as a person rather than a color, expresses profound gratitude to the black people who risked their lives to save him. By contrast, others, such as a reporter named Judith Tur, wonder why South-Central blacks can't be more like Magic Johnson or Arthur Ashe, adding that "white people are getting so angry, they're going back fifty years." A suburban real estate agent named Elaine Young, who has had thirty-six silicone surgeries on her face, whines that "we don't have the freeway, we can't eat anywhere, everything's closed," meanwhile defending her decision to hole up in the Beverly Hills Hotel.

These are easy targets; and it is true that *Twilight* sometimes lacks the dialectical thickness, as well as the surprise and unpredictability, of *Fires in the Mirror*. Lasting over two hours, it seems too long *and* too short for its subject. The L.A. riots were a response to violence and injustice by means of violence and injustice, and the paradox still to be explored is how looting and burning Korean stores and destroying your own neighborhood, not to mention racial assaults on innocent people, could become acceptable means of protest against inequity and racism. With most of them still in shock, few of Smith's respondents are in a position to examine the irrationality of such acts unless, like Shelby Coffey, they cite "a vast, even Shakespearean range of motives."

Smith makes some effort to penetrate these motives by ending her piece with a poetic reflection by a gang member on the "limbo" twilight of crack addicts, but the metaphor somehow seems inadequate. Still, if she has not always gone beyond the events of this tragedy, she has powerfully dramatized a world of almost universal tension and hatred. George C. Wolfe's elaborate production, with its videos of King's beating and films of Los Angeles burning, is probably more appropriate for the coming Broadway move than for the stage of the Public. But it leaves us with a shocking sense of how America's hopes for racial harmony were left burning in the ashes of South-Central L.A.

Mason's **Politically Incorrect** (John Golden Theater) is bound to fan these fires further. It is totally inflammatory, offensive in the extreme, brazen, cheeky, reckless, unapologetic. It is also painfully funny, though Mason uses no obscenity, in that rude, unbuttoned manner first patented by Lenny Bruce, then developed by Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy. Still smarting from the abuse that he suffered, mostly from white liberals, for using the word *schvartze* in the first Giuliani campaign, Mason is now delivering a ferocious assault on all the P.C. fortresses, not only black power but feminism, gay pride, affirmative action, Hillary and Bill, a sensation-hungry press and those stupid enough to blame the media for crime and violence.

Mason is tempting fate and knows it. The real purpose of his show, he says, is to tell the truth as he sees it, and for that "I can get killed," or at least clubbed in the knees for satirizing Tonya Harding. I was reminded of Bruce, after questioning Jackie Kennedy's motives for climbing out of the presidential limo in Dallas, pointing at the chandelier and saying it was going to explode. Like Bruce, Mason has turned himself into a sacrificial object. At the preview I saw he was roundly heckled by a woman in the balcony whom he referred to throughout as "that sick stupid yenta." Having once identified himself as the "hit of the building," he now expects to be hit by the building.

This may account for the slightly nervous manner of his delivery. His dyed red hair topping his half-closed eyes and masklike face, a guided missile in a double-breasted suit, Mason seems terrified of silence. Even when he dries, he still keeps spritzing. The perfect embodiment of the Jewish anxiety that is his subject, he is confident only when he stays on Jewish subjects. Entering the stage announcing that "this is one of the great thrills of all time to be able to see me in person," he immediately begins badgering gentiles in the audience ("Do you understand this, mister?" "Who am I talking to?"). His safety zone is Jewish-gentile contrasts. Jews always have the biggest doctors in the world—the head of the hospital. Rising from his chair, he kvetches and moans, "Did you ever see a healthy Jew?" Jews have no desire to be in rodeos, while gentiles love to fly off broncos ("I say, schmuck, use the other hand"). Jews won't become jockeys because they could never weigh eighty-five pounds ("A Jew is not going to give up coffee and cake just to sit on a horse").

This is familiar stuff from an entertaining insult-comedian, but for most of *Politically Incorrect* Mason has considerably less ingratiating things on his mind. One of them is to defend the Jewish civil rights record against anti-Semites like Farrakhan. He rejects the charge that Jews were slave traders. They came from Kiev, not plantations, carrying matzo balls, not cotton balls. Mason is enraged by the whole notion of what constitutes a "minority" in America. Jews, who are lumped with the majority, are "the most persecuted minority in the world." He therefore would like affirmative action for Jews, starting with a lower basketball net. Whites get fired for saying that blacks make better athletes, but blacks are allowed to make a movie called *White Men Can't Jump*.

Indeed, it is reverse discrimination that really shivers his kishkes: "Only the majority is allowed to be persecuted. Because of rules barring previous knowledge of a case, the judicial system is a total fraud—you have to be mentally retarded to get on a jury. The proof: the Menendez brothers "admitted that they killed their parents and the jury said They didn't." To be guilty of sexual harassment, all you have to do is show up: "You're not looking, you're leering you're not walking, you're stalking." And no matter how lazy or incompetent she is, you can't fire a woman from a job

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employ a black homosexual female and "you'd better close your business in a second." As for homosexuals, they're always parading. "Not only that, they demand to be in your parade. At the Mafia party, do you invite women from Hadassah?"

As if this were not enough to alienate him from the Broadway audience, Mason spends most of the second half of his show attacking President Clinton, largely because of what Mason considers his wayward treatment of the truth. "Washington couldn't tell a lie; Nixon couldn't tell the truth; Clinton can't tell the difference." Nixon used to *schvitz* when he lied; Clinton *schvitzes* when he tells the truth. "He says he smoked marijuana but didn't inhale. Would you put a pastrami sandwich in your mouth if you didn't want to eat it?"

Whether on the subject of Bosnia, Haiti, Whitewater or his own health plan, Clinton can do nothing right. The only thing, in fact, that Mason will defend about Clinton is his alleged adultery, a subject on which he finds the press to be totally hypocritical. Still, Mason can't resist his own digs at Clinton's sex life. The president is always in shorts because he doesn't have time to put his pants on, and Hillary selects the women he appoints on the basis of their unattractiveness. (And Ruth Bader Ginsburg was chosen because she was so skinny that Clarence Thomas wouldn't bother her.)

I may be wrong, but as a commercial venture the new Mason show may be a serious miscalculation. Certainly the tepid applause at the conclusion of the evening did not augur well for ticket sales. The liberal Jewish spectators that Mason usually attracts are hardly the likeliest audience for satire about minority groups, and *Politically Incorrect* will undoubtedly be charged with sexual and racial intolerance. Still, it's not more restraint we need in a time of muzzles on free speech—let's leave that to Catharine MacKinnon and the sensitivity trainers—so much as the freedom to hear the unmentionable, even when it hurts. Mason may be wrongheaded at times, but he's brave, fearless and frontal, and that makes for an exhilarating, if disturbing, evening in the theater. •

A team of scholars combine to get it wrong.

The Use and Abuse of Herstory

By Lawrence Stone

I.

Some years ago the progressive and energetic publishing firm of Laterza e Figli in Rome proposed to some leading French historians in Paris, historians mostly associated with the famous École Pratique des Hautes Études, that they should undertake the production of a multivolume *History of Private Life in the West*, from the Greeks to the present day. This massive series, whose topic in the end consisted mostly of a history of the family and sexuality, received mixed reviews, but apparently it sold extremely well.

Encouraged by this success, Laterza suggested to the French that they organize a second multivolume series, *A History of Women in the West*, thus tapping into what has been, in America if not in Europe, the fastest-growing area of historical inquiry. The West is defined as Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, plus North America, but excluding Central America and South America and (for unexplained reasons) nonwhites wherever they may be in the area. The result is five massive volumes, amounting to some 3,000 pages, which have already been published in French, Italian, Dutch and several other languages, and which now appear in English.

The original French edition is almost entirely useless as a work of reference, since it lacks an index of anything more than personal names. In any case its utility would have been seriously reduced by the whimsical decision of the publisher to set all the page numbers vertically! Nor are chapter subheadings of much help, since so many are opaque to the innocent reader ("Alterity in Dialogue" and the like). The English edition, however, has an excellent subject index, which includes items as esoteric as *pulcheria*, sperm production and veils.

But the flaws in this whole enterprise are more basic, and there are several of them. First, the volumes lack coherence, which is inevitable when sixty-eight different authors are left to gallop off in all directions, and on a loose rein; the volumes should have been half the length, and each one should have been written by not more than two or three authors, with the general editors coordinating the whole enterprise and making sure that each volume was organized on similar lines and answered similar questions. Second, this is essentially a gigantic exercise in French, not international, scholarship. Two-thirds of the authors and all but one of the editors are French; a mere 17 percent are Americans and the rest are mostly Italians, plus one or two from England and Germany. The editors admit that women's studies, as they have been stimulated by the feminist movement, are more highly developed in America than in Europe, but the admission makes the relatively minor Anglo-Saxon contribution all the more indefensible.

This French bias in authorship leads to a French bias in content, the most striking example, indeed the most hilarious one, being a whole section devoted to the province of Quebec in the twentieth century, while there is no such section on America or Britain. In general the subject matter is disproportionately devoted to Gallic women. The bibliography is equally distorted. The bibliography for England in the nineteenth century has only eight titles (two of which are by French scholars, while one is mysteriously listed as "Critique, 'Victoria Station' No. 405-406 *fevrier-mars* 1981"). Americans, British, Dutch, Germans, Scandinavians and East Europeans don't get much attention. So irritated have scholars from other countries become by this favoritism that in some national editions they have added a chapter and an introduction of their own, in order to deal more fairly with their own national history. (There is internal evidence to suggest that there were bitter disputes over the Gallic bias of the English-language volumes, and in two places the lid is lifted off the bubbling caldron for a moment, leading to the publication of two rival introductions in Volumes I and III, and a third attempt at an introduction by the French general editors alone in Volume V.)

It is easy enough to see what makes the American historians of women, most of them women themselves, different from their French sisters. The Americans have their own journals, annual meetings, women's studies programs and other institutional structures that mold a coherent identity and provide

LAWRENCE STONE is the author most recently of *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England 1660-1857* (Oxford University Press).

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arenas for internal dispute. This development has its good sides and its bad. The volume of work, and its coherence, has been very impressive; but the institutional academic structure has tended to ghettoize women's studies rather than to integrate them into traditional disciplines such as history or literature. The Americans have built up a very impressive body of scholarship about women in the public sphere as well as the private sphere, in the work force and the grain riots as well as in the kitchen, the nursery and the bedroom. These scholars are mostly the products of feminist ideology and survivors of the culture wars of the 1980s. They believe in structural analysis, and they are ready to cram more or less everything into the three-part straitjacket of race, class and gender, which is often used as a universal explanatory model.

The first volume of the English-language edition begins with a polite but devastating criticism of the series' general approach and organization, written by two distinguished American historians, Natalie Zemon Davis and Joan Scott. They point out that the volumes are more "eclectic and open-ended" (that is, chaotic) than they would have been if organized by an Anglo-American team. They express their regret that more attention has not been paid to such topics as equality and the differences between the sexes; the complementarity of the roles of males and females over time (say, the division of labor between men and women in the home and in the fields of the premodern agricultural period); the relative importance of race, class and gender as governing forces in history; and theories about the social construction of sexuality, as opposed to genetic inheritance—especially as those theories affect the issue of lesbianism. This is a subject that is conspicuous mostly for its absence from these 3,000 pages, except for those on the nineteenth century, where it is admirably covered by Judith Walkowitz, who is an American. Davis and Scott conclude that the undertaking lacks a coherent analytical focus, that it is confined to Western Europe, and that it is composed of multiple scattershot essays that are often works in progress rather than finished studies. They warn that disappointment awaits the reader seeking a comprehensive overview, or even a coherent outline, of what is known and what is still under dispute.

These two pages of criticism are especially striking for being followed by another introduction, this one by the French general editors. The latter put up a somewhat lame defense of the enterprise, freely admitting that "our coverage may at times seem spotty." They are right: it does. They concede that they have no overarching model, that they deliberately left their sixty-eight authors free to develop their own possibly contradictory theories. And the result is that none of these five volumes can stand as a well-rounded history. Coherence is lacking; important themes fall through the cracks; and it is often impossible to see the forest for the trees.

Though the historical data, until modern times, consists mostly of men talking about women, this history is written almost entirely by women: 90 percent of all the editors and contributors are women, and in the fourth and fifth volumes, which cover the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there is only one lonely male out of thirty-six contributors. The editor of Volume V feels a little guilty about this, but she defends her choice on the ground that it represented not a deliberate policy of exclusion, but a historiographical reality. That may be true; but one has only to think of the contribution of male historians in America to the study of demography, family history and sexuality—Peter Brown on the profound effect of early Christianity on women, or David Herlihy on the role of large workshops for women that flourished in the Middle Ages—to realize how substantial the male contribution has been.

A History of Women in the West
edited by Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot

Volume I: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints
edited by Pauline Schmitt Pantel
(Harvard University Press, 624 pp., $29.95, $15.95 paper)

Volume II: Silences of the Middle Ages
edited by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber
(Harvard University Press, 576 pp., $29.95)

Volume III: Renaissance and the Enlightenment Paradoxes
edited by Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge
(Harvard University Press, 576 pp., $29.95)

Volume IV: Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War
edited by Geneviève Fraisse and Michelle Perrot
(Harvard University Press, 660 pp., $29.95)

Volume V: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century
edited by Francoise Thèbaud
(Harvard University Press, 713 pp., $29.95)

And there is another, more delicate point to be raised about this almost exclusive recruitment of women historians. As we have learned the hard way from the example of Marxist historians, it is dangerous to allow historical scholarship to be driven by a contemporary program of social reform. Many women scholars, of course, recognize this problem. And yet one contributor to this series, who is supposed to be discussing Plato's and Aristotle's treatment of women, cannot restrain her righteous indignation: "How can one retain one's objectivity in the face of such obtuseness and injustice that crop up so frequently" in the works that she has under review?

One can fully sympathize with her feeling, and still feel uneasy about her abandonment of objectivity. It must be said, though, that these volumes steer relatively clear of this temptation—so clear, in fact, that anyone looking for a history of feminism is likely to be disappointed. It is one of the oddities of this enterprise that it fails to provide a full history of feminism outside the nineteenth century. Mary Wollstonecraft rates just over a single page for herself, together with a thin scattering of passing references. Betty Friedan rates no more than two passing references in the introduction to Volume V. In this way the history of feminism from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century gets grossly shortchanged.

The general editors of this huge enterprise, Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, are clearly uneasy. They attribute the mounting interest in women's history to anthropology, to public concerns about the family, to the rise of women's movements and to "the quest for roots—roots of [women's] ... domination by men, and the relations between the sexes across space and time." They argue, rightly, that "we must resist the idea that women are in themselves an object of history. It is their place, their condition, their roles and powers, their mode of action, their silence and their talk that we must scrutinize." But they fail to notice that this proposition, if it is true, undermines the whole purpose of the enterprise, which is predicated on the assumption that it is possible to make women alone "an object of history." Duby and Perrot do implicitly recognize this problem, and try to get around it by asking for "a strictly relational history which interrogates the whole of society and which is also a history of men." Alas for good intentions! One thing that these 3,000 pages conspicuously do not offer is "a history of men." Nor do the editors ever explain what they mean by "relational" history, or how they propose to integrate men into the story.

The most aggravating feature of these massive volumes, however, is the relative

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scarcity of hard facts about the condition of women. There exists a huge amount of recently discovered historical data about the private lives of women. It concerns fertility, birth control, the age of first marriage, the struggle to control reproduction. There is also a growing literature on sexuality and prostitution. It is hard to avoid the impression that French female historians of women have not paid proper attention to these new findings, most of them established by male historical demographers and American sexologists. The reason for this neglect, presumably, is that the material tends to stress the private, biological, wife-and-mother aspect of the female role in history. As a result, no continuous statistical series and no comprehensive data are provided about the causes and the effects of demographic change. There is not a table or a graph in the whole 3,000 pages. There are some scattered references to numbers, but they mystify rather than illuminate.

Moreover, little is said about abortion before the twentieth century. There is no mention even of the fact that legislation against abortion began only in the 1800s, and applied only to fetal death in the last six months of parturition. It is impossible to find long-term figures in these volumes about changing rates of mortality in childbirth, or about the shifting median age of marriage in the various classes and countries, or about the median number of children born, or about access to contraceptive devices and practices. It is not until Volume IV, on the nineteenth century, that these lacunae begin to be filled, in an excellent article by Walkowitz. Nor is there any extended discussion of whether or not the situation of women improved in the eighteenth century owing to the spread of affective individualism and romanticism, the impulses that we associate with Locke and Rousseau. Before the fifth volume there is nothing about the great shift from wet-nursing to breast-feeding in the late eighteenth century, presumably because it did not occur in France; or about the greater freedom of choice given to women in the selection of a spouse, and the greater legal freedom for women to administer their own property.

II.

Confronted with the history of women, one must begin by asking whether or not gender is a significant and useful category for the division of history. It is true, of course, that for millennia—indeed, up to the nineteenth century—women were considered, and treated in law and in practice, as wholly

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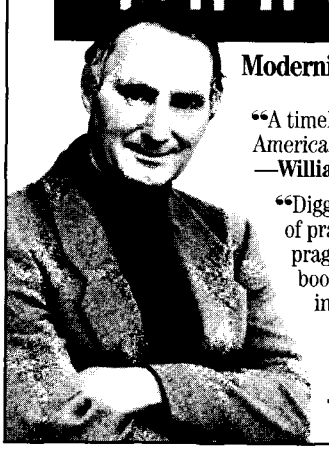

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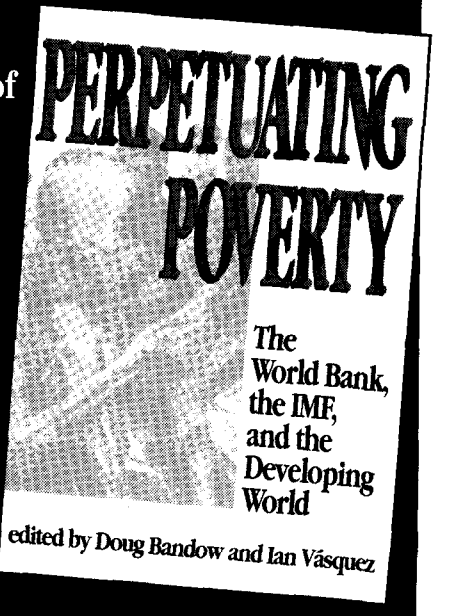

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subordinate to men, often as mere chattel, closely approximating slaves. Still, despite all the injustice, they *were* human beings; and the structure of power in any individual family has always depended less on theory and on law than on the relative personal qualities of its members. Even under the harshest of patriarchal systems, and operating within its limits, strong-minded women have found the means to get their way.

I am not a great admirer of the fashionable theory of *l'histoire immobile*, the view that nothing much changed through the centuries; but in the case of women, it has a lot going for it. As Catharine MacKinnon has observed,

> For most women, life is little but everyday.... Across time and culture, ... the sameness of women's lives is as striking as the diversity of conditions under which it is lived. Men rise and fall. Their dynasties and revolutions and intellectual fashions come and go. Things happen. In the lives of women, men are served, children cared for, home is made, work is done, the sun goes down.

It should be noted that in pre-contraceptive societies a large part of most women's time on earth was occupied with pregnancy and parturition. From the fifth century B.C. until about 1900, the law and the theory of patriarchy furnished the dominant ideology, which was enshrined in the West long ago by Plato and Aristotle. Even women's exceptional beauty was called into question by the casual assumption among Greek males that an adolescent boy was just as beautiful and just as sexually attractive as a woman, an aesthetic and sensual attitude that persisted in Europe far into the Middle Ages.

Aristotle declared that women were inferior to men in all respects. Anatomically, their sexual organs were inferior copies of the genitals of males, being merely turned inside out (false); their bodies were physically weaker than those of men (true); their brains were smaller (false); they died earlier than men (false); and their contribution to reproduction was limited to the production of the inert material while it was the male semen that was the embodiment of the soul and the giver of movement (false). And finally, for many centuries up to about 1800, it was generally believed, that is to say, it was believed by men, that the female is sexually more voracious and more insatiable than the male, although nobody doubted that the latter is naturally more promiscuous. The truth of these last propositions is uncertain, and they may well be reflections of male insecurity. The theory of female sexual insatiability depended on the observed biological capacity of women for multiple orgasms, far beyond the powers of any male. In this respect, the female is to the male as an AK-47 is to a muzzle-loading musket. The theory of greater male promiscuity seems to be true in practice, but this promiscuity may well be the result of social conditioning. Unlike female infidelity, which was severely punished, male adultery was condoned, since it rarely threatened to produce spurious offspring with claims to family property.

As a result of this theorizing, women in the Mediterranean basin were, for millennia, largely confined to the house, for fear of losing their virginity. Elsewhere, in addition to producing babies and running the household, married women made money by looking after chickens, milking cows, selling homemade ale and helping to take in the harvest. Sometimes women did enter the public sphere. Grain riots were common phenomena during the early modern period, when population growth pressed hard on the food supply. Enraged by rocketing prices on the market, women joined forces with their menfolk, who pushed them out in front of the crowd, in the expectation that the authorities would be less likely to kill or to maim women than men.

Otherwise, women scarcely appeared in the history books, even though they comprised a narrow majority of the human race. The history books were concerned with public affairs: politics and war, kings and battles. If women did appear, it was mostly in the unflattering roles of witches or prostitutes. Rich women, in their role as wives, or more likely as mistresses, often wielded influence over patronage in church and state, but they rarely meddled directly in the making of grand policy. A tiny handful became queens, a position in which they usually performed creditably, and sometimes brilliantly. A significant number became rich and therefore powerful widows, and a few became abbesses or saints: these were the only ways for women to obtain power in the public sphere by their own merits.

The limited role that even educated elite women played in the past is vividly brought to life in a letter composed by the very articulate wife of a Texan planter during the American Civil War, who wrote to her absent husband that she was "so sick of trying to do a man's business, when I am nothing but a poor contemptible piece of multiplying human flesh, tied to the house by a crying young one and looked upon as belonging to a race of inferior beings." This standard evaluation of women by men is echoed by Dr. Johnson's savage aphorism: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all." Both quotations come from the Anglo-Saxon world; but they stand for a general Western stereotype.

Still, the question lingers. Is gender a useful category for historical analysis? It is certainly correct politically to argue that race, class and gender drive the machinery of history, and woe betide the historian who dares to question this formula, repeated in book after book like a mantra. And yet such a scheme is too simplistic to be very useful. Indeed, a case may be made that gender played a much less independent role in the past than it now fashionable to suppose. There is little doubt that life as it was experienced by a woman from a family of wealth and high status bore no relation whatsoever, before 1900, to life as it was experienced by a woman from an impoverished, menial family. Status and wealth were far more powerful controlling categories than gender.

It could be argued that the law was an equally powerful factor in molding women's lives. In Anglo-Saxon countries where the common law controlled property rights, women were denied control over their own property at marriage, an injustice corrected only in the late nineteenth century. In areas of Roman law and Napoleonic law, however, married women retained control of their property. In this respect the helplessness of women was greater in Britain and America than elsewhere. Education, or the lack of it, was also a crucially important factor. In the long, sad history of women under patriarchy, nothing is more striking than their systematic deprivation of education; and it was this deprivation that robbed women of roles in the public sphere, and of the capacity to devise a feminist position that would last. Only a handful of wealthy, high-status women could break through this barrier. It is sobering to realize that equal opportunity for women in the field of education is only about a century old.

The most promising future course for the history of women is not to go on endlessly repeating and proving the obvious, that is to say, the grossly unjust treatment that women have received over thousands of years at the hands of males. It is, instead, to find ways to link the private sphere of women back to the public sphere of men. This can be done by studying the important role that women played in the transfer of property, for example, or in altering middle-class attitudes toward the public regulation of prostitution in the nineteenth

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century; or by examining shifts in attitudes toward sexuality and the family and their interlocking relation with proto-industrialization and the industrial revolution.

One example of the approach that I have in mind is a recent article (written by a woman) in the *Journal of Modern History*, which exposes the confused and embarrassed reactions of twentieth-century secular British administrators, white missionaries and native chieftains to attempts to ban the ancient practice of the Kikuyu in Kenya of performing clitoridectomies upon their young women. Another example is Laura Engelstein's recent book, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin de Siècle Russia*, which shows how disputes about problems associated with sex and gender deeply affected Russian society, culture and politics in the years before World War I. These two works are models of the direction in which women's history ought to go; and they use gender as one of many variables at work in the complex social and political evolution of the modern world.

III.

Unfortunately, *The History of Women in the West* shows relatively few signs of this kind of sophistication. Instead, the editors defend the absence of an overriding theme in these volumes on the grounds of pluralism. This is fair enough; but for this reason there is no extended discussion of many important theoretical issues. There is no reference, for example, to the great debate among historians about the effects of slavery upon women. What was it like to be a woman in ancient Greece, where men actively practiced a high-toned pederasty; where domestic slaves, of either sex, were treated by their masters as sexual playthings; and where wives were mostly cooped up at home for breeding purposes? Nor is there any discussion of the divergence of historical opinion on whether or not the lot of women deteriorated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Were they progressively excluded from work outside the home, and confined to the genteel tea table? And was the change, if it occurred, a blessing or a curse? It is more than a little odd that women should have been striving to stay with back-breaking manual labor at a time when men were striving to escape from it. So why should feminist historians mourn their escape from work outside the home, if it did indeed occur, which is anyway doubtful?

The editors also fail to offer an extended discussion of the causes of the liberation of women from the home. Were they released by changes in family structure, or by the jobs offered in the industrial revolution? Did changes in the family precede, and open the way for, the industrial revolution, or was it the other way around? (The other way around has been the standard opinion since Engels, but this view now seems less and less plausible.) We are now certain that the isolated nuclear family, late marriage and very low nuptuality, which left between one-quarter and one-tenth of the population unmarried, have all been institutions and patterns of behavior peculiar to England, North America and Northwest Europe since at least the early sixteenth century. If the industrial revolution was built on "proto-industrialization," that is, on textile and lace production in the home, rather than on large-scale factory production, which now seems to be the conventional wisdom, then it was the family that determined the economy, not the economy that determined the family.

Let us now turn to the individual volumes. The first covers the Ancient World, that is, classical Greece and Rome, but in a peculiar hit-or-miss fashion. There is nothing about the teachings of Jewish law and religion, which are generally acknowledged to be among the important elements of Western civilization, and to have affected the position of women in the West. And some of the arguments are plain bizarre: commenting on Augustus's attempt to reinforce the nuclear family and elevate marital harmony and fidelity, one writer argues that the emperor's efforts had the result of encouraging more marital sex, and therefore more pregnancies, and therefore a greater likelihood that wives would meet an early death in childbirth. The moral seems to be that affectionate husbands are dangerous to their wives, since they are likely to get them pregnant! But the writer cannot make up her mind about the seriousness of the threat, at one point suggesting that the likelihood of maternal mortality in childbirth was 5 percent to 10 percent, at another point claiming that it was more than 20 percent.

The second volume, covering the Middle Ages, is edited by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, the author of a very distinguished book about the family in fifteenth-century Florence, which was based on a uniquely informative tax register of all the city's inhabitants. Klapisch-Zuber does her best to make bricks with very little straw. She admits that she proposes no overarching scheme for the role of women in medieval history, no model of progress and retreat, no exhaustive synthetic overview, no new periodization. And again and again she laments the extreme paucity of the evidence, and the relative absence of statistical data (save for Florence) and personal records such as letters or diaries, except for those of a few saints, which mostly have come down to us as edited for hagiographical purposes by male scribes.

Nothing much changed, according to Klapisch-Zuber, in the treatment of women, which was summed up by a Florentine man who observed that "a woman, whether good or bad, needs a lord and master, and sometimes a stick." The one major innovation was that the church, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, finally set about imposing celibacy upon the clergy, while offering to the laity marriage based on mutual consent alone. This latter transformation, had it been enforced, would have fundamentally altered the experience of women. The trouble is that we do not really know to what extent these efforts succeeded. Clearly, most property-owning patriarchs continued to impose marriage or celibacy on their daughters. By the fifteenth century, meanwhile, many priests were living with their housekeepers; friars were notorious seducers of married women, whom they were free to meet in their homes while the husbands were out working; and nobody knows how much adultery and concubinage was going on. One has to assume that the many cases that came before the church courts are merely the tip of a vast iceberg.

The third volume covers the sixteenth

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century, and it is directed by Natalie Zemon Davis, the only American editor. Here the data at last become plentiful, even overwhelming, and there is suddenly more grist for argument. As a result the clash between the French views and American views of women's history comes out into the open. In her preface Davis flatly denies that women in the past were always and inevitably dominated by men, which is true enough if one examines the full complexity of life as it is lived. She also puts a very un-French emphasis upon representation, arguing that "there is no point in writing a history of women that is concerned only with women's notions and modes of life, and not with the way discourse influenced behavior, or vice versa." Thus the American contribution plays down the ineluctable role of biology and genetics in determining the life of women, insisting that even female beauty "is here treated as a social and historical issue for women, not just a natural one." I am not sure about that, but this is an improvement on the other volumes, which say little about biology, and even less about sexual passion and the female body.

Davis claims that the structure of her volume reflects a deliberate design: "The analysis about discourse about the sexes is framed by a section on everyday activities and beliefs and a section on women departing from the mainstream—such as prostitutes, criminals and witches." This aptly summarizes the form imposed by Davis upon her somewhat intractable material. And yet even her energy and her clarity of purpose do not suffice to push her sixteen other contributors into producing a fully coherent picture. The contributions are, as usual, mostly by French scholars, with one solid piece of British empiricism by Olwen Hufton, embedded awkwardly in a wobbly jelly of discourse and representation. Moreover, the anthropological stress on nurture rather than nature strikes an odd note at a time when sociobiologists are finding more and more genetic explanations of human behavior; it now seems, with such bitterly contested issues as the origins of sexual orientation, that the truth lies somewhere between biology and culture.

In twenty-seven pages Hufton conveys more useful information about the socioeconomic facts of life than all the other essays put together. The contrast between her essay and the others in Davis's volume is very striking: her hard-nosed British empiricism floats in a sea of Franco-American speculation on a diversity of matters of little relevance to the history of women. It is intriguing, at least, to learn that the practice of frequent washing with water, inherited from Rome, and still practiced in the Mediterranean area and beyond, was abandoned in the sixteenth century. The surviving bathhouses were closed, partly in an attempt to check the spread of syphilis, and partly due to a medical theory holding that the skin is permeable to water. Thus people during the Renaissance became dirtier and smellier, as well as more sexually open, than at any time in the previous 1,000 years. This openness was brought to a halt, however, during the seventeenth century, owing to the temporary rise of the fanatically anti-sensual and prudish ideology of puritanism among Protestants and Catholics. What this has to do with women, however, is obscure. The best parts of the volume deal with deviant women, prostitutes and witches.

The rise of female education in the early modern period is examined, but the brief flowering of high-class classical education among a handful of elite women in the sixteenth century, which included the daughters of Sir Thomas More and Queen Elizabeth herself, is ignored, maybe because it was largely an English phenomenon. This little explosion of learned ladies did not last. During the seventeenth century learned women were ridiculed by Molière and others, while in 1760 even Rousseau set the standard for the age by declaring "all of a woman's education should relate to men. To please men, to win their love and respect ... to make their lives pleasant and agreeable."

The authors conclude that most Enlightenment thought continued to stress the inferiority and subjection of women as both natural and desirable in a well-ordered society. All agree that the French Revolution did nothing to improve the position of women. Condorcet did lay out the illogicality of the patriarchal model in a society formally dedicated to equality, and thus for the first time suggested extending the franchise to women. But he lost his head for his trouble, and the granting of citizenship to women had to wait more than a century. Nor did the Enlightenment alter the ancient view of the dangers of women's voracious sexuality. Kant believed that "the man allows himself to be exhausted by the woman's excessive demands on his sexual capacities." The theory of the frigid woman was an invention of the Victorians, designed to put an end to this strain on the male sexual system.

Perhaps the most interesting and coherent volume is the one covering the nineteenth century, in which sexuality and the body are at last fully explored, and the concept of "woman" is broken down into categories defined by religion: the Catholic woman, the Protestant woman, the Jewish woman. Whether these categories work is a debatable question, but at least we are introduced to religion as a variable of history, and gender is subordinated. It is in this volume that feminist ideology is given the attention that it deserves. Which brings us at last to the twentieth century.

The oddest and the most unsatisfactory volume is probably the final one. There is no in-depth discussion of how it is that our own century has seen the liberation of women after two millennia of near slavery. Excluded from citizenship and the franchise when these began to become important, in Periclean Athens and again in late seventeenth-century England and in America, women started the battle for the vote a long time ago, but it was won only in the early twentieth century. And the victory was only consolidated by a succession of further changes. It took a new generation of women to pick up the fight and to claim added rights under the principle of equality of opportunity. The introduction of reliable contraception was momentous, and then followed the movement for sexual liberation that slowly spread down the social system after the 1920s, eventually leading to the introduction of no-fault divorce in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Meanwhile the educational barrier was at last broken, which was perhaps the decisive step; women were attaining higher education in greater and greater numbers and then slowly making their way into the professions, as well as filling the exploding clerical sector of the economy as secretaries and typists. And finally the squeeze on domestic finances in the '70s and '80s has made the two income family a necessity rather than a luxury.

At last women are free to work, to enter any field of economic activity, to reach any position in society, to pursue sexual happiness and to control their reproductive system. To have changed so deeply rooted a social, economic and cultural system—the system of patriarchal inequality—so radically in a mere 100 years is nothing short of astonishing. The current life experience and expectations of a woman in the West of almost any social and economic rank (except the very bottom) bear no relation at all to what they had been as recently as 1900. Of course, perplexities remain. It may be that women have forged new chains for themselves in the effort to be busy full-time workers as well as compe

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ent housewives, amiable companions, ulfilled sexual partners and devoted nothers. Nor is it easy to foresee where he feminist movement is headed, now hat so many of its primary goals have been achieved. A drive against sexual harassment that ends up with the Antioch College rules, and shrill and unsubstantiated onslaughts on pornography, hardly looks like a promising direction or a noble and successful fight for equality and justice. So the end of the story is not yet in sight.

It would be hard to imagine a historical enterprise more fraught with hazards than a history of women in the West. Aside from the particular awkwardnesses of this specific project—a crowd of authors dominated by one nationality—here is the more general problem of evidence, which would confront even a more economical and ecumenical collection of historians. The exclusion of women from education for so much of the past makes the writing of their history in the ancient world and the Middle Ages very frustrating. Since women could not write and did not write, the vast majority of them lived and died without leaving any personal record behind them. From the ancient world and the Middle Ages only a handful of documents survive that are definitely written by women and have not been edited and embroidered upon by men.

Worse still, the spread of democracy and elementary education affected women adversely at first, since they were totally excluded from the franchise and for a long time lagged far behind men in literacy. The gender gap actually widened. And even when middle-class women and upper-class women gained access to secondary education, as they did in the eighteenth century, its content was largely confined to matters that were thought to contribute to their eligibility on the marriage market, such as the French language, dancing and playing a musical instrument. Into the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, women were generally denied instruction in classical languages, philosophy, theology and science, all of which were the exclusive preserve of men.

The problem of evidence makes plain, moreover, that there exists an even larger problem of principle that haunts this historiography. It is not possible to duplicate the success of a major study in a clearly defined area of human activity—such as private life as distinct from public life—with a study of members of the biologically determined gender. In the examination of life experiences, differences of income, class and education have often been more important than differences between genders. Until very recently the lives of poor women did not change much over time or over space. Since they took little part in public life, their lives, like the lives of poor men, were typically ones of monotonous drudgery, as boring to read about as to live. And so the history of women, not least in these volumes, is mostly concerned with that tiny minority of women who left some traces in the sands of time. The silence of the rest is deafening. •

Seize the Bliss

BY ROBERT ALTER

It All Adds Up: From the Dim Past to the Uncertain Future by Saul Bellow

(Viking, 327 pp., $24.95)

The title of this miscellany spanning forty-five years jumps to a certain conclusion. Anyone who assembles a volume of essays published in different places and written for different occasions is bound to be a little nervous about whether they make a real book, and Saul Bellow's choice of title introduces a further question: What precisely is the "it" that adds up through these sundry pieces? I think that he means "it" to refer to a sense of life, of the modern cultural predicament and of the uses of art, with special emphasis on the novel. And the book does offer a series of vividly framed insights into all these themes.

But Bellow remains a novelist, not an essayist. There is not much sustained argumentation here, even less systematic thinking. Bellow expresses repeated disdain for systematic thinking and often likes to identify himself in contradistinction to the crowd of intellectuals. This may sound a little surprising in a writer whose prose, fictional and nonfictional, buzzes with ideas, but there are intellectuals and intellectuals. Bellow means by "intellectuals" something like what the Russians mean by "intelligentsia," that is, thinkers who work with a set of abstract *idées reçues*, educated conformists who believe that they are in possession of the blueprint that can explain history and redirect society. In defining himself in this way, of course, Bellow stands in a long line of modern intellectuals who do not trust intellectuals.

The truly effective "it" of the title, I would suggest, is the life of the writer. This book is really an autobiographical collage rather than a collection of essays, and as such it is an engaging book. The assembled pieces belong to different genres. There are numerous travel-notes (France, Italy, Spain and the more exotic landscapes of Illinois and Vermont), five eulogies for writers to whom Bellow was close, some political journalism, a few lucubrations on the writer and his public and two interviews. Most of this writing is blessedly anecdotal, and even when Bellow is evoking a person or a place, what he is really doing is defining the impact of the person or the place on his own life. Stories about his formative years abound—a few that go back to his early childhood in Montreal, many more about his late adolescence in Chicago, when he first breathed the heady air of modern culture and '30s Marxism, and about his sojourn as a literary neophyte in New York during the '40s, among the *Partisan Review* intellectuals and the Village bohemians.

It is the Chicago of Bellow's youth, however, that is the central presence in this book, and some of the writing that he has done about it, in what are ostensibly essays or lectures, is as evocative as the strongest passages in *The Adventures of Augie March*. He remembers the old, untransformed cityscape with a vividness untinged by sentimental idealization:

> The train used to make rickety speed through the violet evenings of summer over the clean steel rails (nothing else was clean) through the backyards of Chicago with their gray wooden porches, the soiled gray stairs, the clumsy lumber of the trusses, the pulley clotheslines. On the South Side you rode straight into the stockyard fumes. The frightful stink seemed to infect the sun itself, so that it was reeking as well as shining.

The particularities of place are summoned forth in order to trace their effect in shaping the writer's sense of the world. Chicago simultaneously stirs his imagination and depresses him about the possibilities of touching the

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larger reaches of life:

> On winter afternoons when the soil was frozen to a depth of five feet and the Chicago cold seemed to have the head-hunters' power of shrinking your face, you felt in the salt-whitened streets and amid the spattered car bodies the characteristic mixture of tedium and excitement, of narrowness of life together with a strong intimation of scope, a simultaneous expansion and constriction of the soul, a clumsy sense of inadequacy, poverty of means, desperate limitation and, at the same time, a craving for more, which demanded that "impractical" measures be taken.

The burden of *It All Adds Up* is to explain what it has meant for Bellow to turn himself into a novelist, coming out of this stimulating and constricting world, and what is involved for him in struggling to remain a novelist and a reader of novels against pervasive cultural currents that sweep people away from the kinds of knowledge and experience that can be realized in the novel. Bellow sees the novel as an arena for the exploration of the diversity of experience—not only the diversity of different individuals, but also the "diversity of existences" within a single person, for whom the very idea of a unitary life may be a self-limiting illusion. Reflecting on the contradictions in Dostoyevsky, he observes that "the degree to which you challenge your own beliefs and expose them to destruction is a test of your worth as a novelist."

Such views help make sense of his deliberately unqualified declaration that "an attack on the novel is also an attack on liberal principles." With this novelistic commitment to diversity, tentativeness and self-questioning, Bellow expresses vehement contempt for what he perceives as the false consciousness of modern popular culture ("This is how the modern world meets the deepest of human needs—by fraud, demagogy, opportunism and profiteering") and the false consciousness of the intellectuals. Since he has always moved in a largely intellectual milieu, it is toward the intellectuals, with special attention to the academic subspecies, that he directs most of his barbs.

The addiction of the intellectuals, Bellow suggests, is to ideology, and ideology is the anti-novelistic mode of thinking par excellence. Bellow defines ideology as "not thinking for oneself, ... a system of false thinking and non-truth that can lead to obedience and conformity." This judgment is instructed by his own early flirtation with radicalism, and even more by the vast landscape of barbed wire and corpses that ideology in our century has produced in Europe and Asia. But even without these ghastly consequences in the world of real politics, Bellow is contemptuous of the salon and lecture-hall radicalism of many contemporary intellectuals, postmodernist or otherwise, whom he accuses of having gone over to "high-level junk culture." Such types, he remarks with unveiled sarcasm, do not rush home after a hard day attending to global crisis "to read Act Three of *The Tempest* or to get in a few pages of Proust before bedtime"; they prefer to contemplate more global crises as a form of entertainment. The testiness of tone here typifies Bellow's stance of impatient dismissiveness toward the objects of his criticism. It is not hard to understand what has provoked his anger; but it is also worth noting that sarcasm hardly constitutes an argument.

Bellow's ire against the intellectuals, which I take to be an oblique expression of his credo as a novelist, is ultimately a stubborn opposition to the insistence that everything is political. (That notion is ubiquitous on our campuses.) In some quarters this stance will be seen as reactionary or at least neoconservative; and though Bellow may in fact have certain affinities with neoconservatism, I do not think that placing him on a political map is a very useful exercise. Whatever his views on how things go awry in the realm of politics, these fragments of a personal credo repeatedly demonstrate his commitment to an order of exalting aesthetic experience that makes mere politics seem meager and self-deluding. It is true that politics has been the subtly pervasive context for much of Bellows's fiction, perhaps most impressively in *Herzog*. But there are many ways of engaging politics, and Bellow seems to suggest that the imagination, even when it engages the political realm, seeks to realize a vision neither dictated nor contained by politics.

The conjunction of Bellow and aestheticism may sound odd. A writer of intermittently autobiographical fiction notable for its American vernacular tang, its skepticism about absolutes, its improvisatory and anecdotal traits, Bellow is poles apart from Flaubert, James and the devotees of the art-novel. And yet one finds him, in two of the pieces in this volume, associating himself with Nabokov's statement that the true end of novel writing is not a represented subject or an idea, but the attainment of a state of "aesthetic bliss." Significantly, he chooses to begin this collection with a homage to Mozart as a supreme instance of achieved art: "Easily or not at all—that is the truth about art. Concentration without effort is at the heart of the thing. Will and desire are silenced (as many mystics have understood) and work i transformed into play."

As Bellow sees it, modern culture is a theater of centrifugal forces that carry u away from ourselves, mak our feelings seem weightless, scrambl the inner resources that might enable u to imagine coherent experience. Th novel, then, becomes "a compensatio for the hopelessness or meanness of exis tence. By some occult method, the write has connected himself with the feeling and ideal conceptions of which few sign remain in ordinary existence." Bellow i a little leery of this compensatory reflex worrying that the aesthetic impulse ca lead to a kind of self-regarding "tyranny in the line of writers from Flaubert t Joyce.

Yet the novel is, after all, a mimeti art, and any states of aesthetic bliss that i may induce are associated with a dee imagining of the experience of others, faith in the revelatory potential of ind vidual human lives. We cannot, Bellow passionately argues, do without suc imaginings. In literature their necessar medium is language, and Bellow is finel sensitive to the power of artfully inven tive language to put us in touch wit realities lost in the shallows of contem porary culture. (One should remembe that, whatever the elements of loosenes in his fiction, at the top of his form he i the strongest American stylist sinc Faulkner.) At the end of a lecture deliv ered at Oxford in 1990 he offers a litt anthology of phrases from famous text that suggest the kind of Mozartia coherence literature can provide:

> A small cue will suffice to remind us that when we hear certain words—"all is but toys," "absent thee from felicity," "a wilderness of monkeys," "green pastures," "still waters" or even the single word "relume"—they revive for us moments of emotional completeness and overflowing comprehension, they unearth buried essences.

It seems to me that Bellow, in expres ing his own credo, touches here on a ra nerve of our cultural predicamen There is a whole academic apparat now in place that cultivates deafness t such resonant words, construing ever thing in the texts in which they occur manifestations of imperialism, patria chal oppression, homophobia and Wes ern logocentrism or altogether displa ing the literary texts with Foucaul Lacan and their many epigones. There a condign cultural urgency in Bellow personal cri de coeur about the spiritu necessity of the experience that a alone can provide.

As a writer he has summoned his ow best resources to try to realize the ae thetic vision that he intimates here di

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cursively. He is no Proust, but his best fiction attains such moments of "overflowing comprehension"—Henderson the Rain King waking to the watermelon pink of dawn's light on the wall of an African hut; Tommy Wilhelm, at the end of *Seize the Day*, wracked with cathartic grief over the death of a stranger; Herzog, emerging from a Manhattan subway exit, seeing above him "the flowering glass, wired and gray, and Broadway heavy and blue in the dusk." A reader of *It All Adds Up* may want to quarrel with particular critical pronouncements, and may occasionally be put off by the more dismissive or dyspeptic passages. These sundry pieces nevertheless make a deeply affecting case for aesthetic bliss as a necessary nutriment in a time of pandemic distraction. And the appeal to art has special force coming from a writer who has not used art as an alibi for an escape from political engagement, or blurred the distinction between art and politics, a novelist who has himself provided American readers, for half a century, in his own work, some of those adumbrations of completeness.

ROBERT ALTER's new book, *Hebrew and Modernity*, will be published by Indiana University Press this spring.

Twist and Doubt

BY ALEXANDER STAR

Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music by Martha Bayles

(The Free Press, 453 pp., $24.95)

One of Reaganism's least heralded acts was to embrace the aging, tattooed body of rock 'n' roll. The conservative annexation of popular music proceeded throughout the '80s, and it took many forms. There was the rise of Christian rock, the attempted pilfering of Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA," the well-publicized Republican enthusiasms of Neil Young. From aimless rebellion to sanctioned authority: the path is short. Of course, some of these tactics backfired, and not every conservative toed the line; Allan Bloom fretted that rock songs were "hymns to the joys of onanism." But on the whole the counterrevolutionaries succeeded in detaching popular music from its vaguely seditious aura. When Willie Nelson visited the Carter White House, he got toned on the roof. When Michael Jackson visited the Reagans, he and the first lady admired each other's gloves.

The conservative espousal of rock 'n' roll is one Reagan initiative that's still in effect. William Bennett (who once enjoyed a blind date with Janis Joplin) and other neoconservatives (who know a profitable export when they see one) have suggested that rock music is the sound track of American freedom. And in the final twist to this strange story, a 21-year-old, punkish MTV V-jay who calls herself Kennedy appeared recently at a right-wing political action conference in Washington, where she exhorted the crowd to "start beating up the liberals."

Martha Bayles is the latest writer with a conservative bent to claim popular music for her own, but it would be wrong to lump her together with her predecessors. She is not an ideologue, and she writes with informed affection about many kinds of music, especially jazz. Still, her mission is clear. Like an evangelist at CBGBs, she aspires to set off a moral revolution among music journalists. She seeks to bring the gospel of "beauty and meaning" to the sorry precincts of rock criticism.

In order to do so Bayles constructs her book around a stark opposition. On one side there's the "tough, affirmative spirit of the blues," which she finds in Count Basie, Duke Ellington, James Brown; on the other side, the "anti-musical, antisocial" tradition that she labels "perverse modernism" (Dada, surrealism, Sid Vicious). An admirer of swing, soul and the sturdy popular song, Bayles is largely agnostic about rock 'n' roll and laments the spreading abrasions of punk, heavy metal and rap. With their rise, "the anarchistic, nihilistic impulses of perverse modernism have been grafted onto popular music, where they have not only undermined the Afro-American tradition, but also encouraged today's cult of obscenity, brutality and sonic abuse." In the process, "individual expressiveness" and "mature emotion" have nearly vanished. Only in "neoclassical jazz" (Wynton Marsalis), bluesy revivalism (Bonnie Raitt) and the friendlier varieties of hip-hop (Arrested Development) does Bayles see much hope for the future.

The novel feature of Bayles's conservative polemic is its defense of the blues, which owes much to the writing of Albert Murray. According to Murray, the African American musical tradition is fundamentally stoical yet affirmative in spirit. The blues look the hardships of poverty and racism up and down and refuse to be crippled by them. The energies and the dexterities of black life are sounded and expressed, but they are also corralled into forms that are exact and exacting. The result, in the music of Basie or Ellington, is a miracle of sobriety and glee; a wide-awake, forward-tending improvisatory pulse that one can dance to *and* live by.

This reading of African American music as a "ritualized way of coping with the harshness of life" is powerful, if incomplete. But Bayles doesn't stop there. To fortify her case for the blues, she also rummages into the art-historical writings of Hilton Kramer, Jacques Barzun and others, drawing a parallel between early jazz and the strain of European art that she labels "extroverted modernism." Like Picasso and Braque, she says, Louis Armstrong experimented with the ebullient "breaking, dissolving and splintering" of forms; one can even "draw a parallel between the brevity of a jazz solo and the shallowness of cubist space." Both cubism and jazz were dynamic acts of engagement with the electrifying disorder of the early twentieth century. They stand in sharp contrast to the mandarin hauteur of "introverted modernism" and the nihilistic frenzy of "perverse modernism."

Following Kramer, Bayles summons into existence a vibrant aesthetic shorn of arid formalism, spiritual hubris, political danger and other challenges to middle-class sensibility. And she calls this attractive art form "extroverted modernism." But since when is great art entirely extroverted (or entirely introverted)? And what exactly does Bayles mean by "perverse modernism"? There is little difference, in her account, between Marinetti and Madonna: they both wanted to seize the media and shock the public. But the desire for fame and immortality is nothing new in art. And it's at least possible that the work of Marinetti, or of his Futurist colleague Umberto Boccioni, has survived not because of their bombastic ideas but because of the lingering force of their exuberant and rather "extroverted" forms.

There's something rather quixotic in this campaign to domesticate modernism and establish a well-fenced zone

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of permissible rebellion. Bayles sneers at the recurring desire of bohemians everywhere to escape the "perceived confines of middle-class life." Yet this desire animated all varieties of early modernism. And surely she would acknowledge that some of those confines are real. In fact, it is precisely because those confines exist that she admires bourgeois life. It's easy to ridicule a child of the middle class who becomes "detached from the official beliefs of his class," in Meyer Schapiro's phrase, or a "voluntary exile," in Michael Harrington's. But long before the 1960s it was the annoying habit of middle-class societies to confuse bourgeois freedom and artistic license, and to define their own values through their members' rebellions. "Perverse modernism" is as rooted in middle-class culture as the more familiar virtues that Bayles applauds. Middle-class rectitude and middle-class rebellion have always been two sides of the same appreciating currency.

Bayles's anatomy of modernism clears the way for her dissection of American popular music, where she finds an ongoing contest between extroverted modernism and perverse modernism. The heyday of extroverted modernism was the swing era. The Basie and Ellington bands combined aesthetic daring with a powerful rhythmic drive. And the sophisticated vivacity of their music, Bayles adds, is a rebuke both to white elitists and black nationalists. The elitists have trouble acknowledging that much of their country's best music is the work of blacks unschooled in European tradition. Black nationalists cannot appreciate that black music itself is a "flexible and inclusive" idiom. Far from embodying some primal essence of the race, it borrows and pillages from every source in sight: Arab melodies, Scottish hymns, European chromaticism. This elegant and syncretic music set an unequaled standard for popular art.

With rock 'n' roll the story thickens Bayles likes the stuff, but she can't ratify its delinquent impulses. And so she argues that rock 'n' roll in the '50s was not the astonishing upheaval that many rock critics, enshrining the passions of their youth, have made it out to be. It was not a musical revolution, not a sexual revolution, not a racial revolution (Chuck Berry's "Sweet Little Sixteen" accepts "hard work and adult authority" as "facts of life.") She admits that Elvis Presley's records carried an undeniable racial jolt, but she thinks this had little to do with the ethical and social transformation of America at the time. White fans of rock 'n' roll typically consumed the music in their own bedrooms and basements and poolhalls. The integration of musical styles had little to do with the integration of American life.

Raising the revisionist stakes, Bayles goes on to argue that rock 'n' roll wasn't a generational revolt either. The juvenile delinquent panic of the '50s anticipated "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" by several years. *The Blackboard Jungle*, the movie that featured Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock," is often remembered for its equation of rock 'n' roll and teen revolt. But as Bayles shows, the equation is an error. The music that the movie used to amplify teen revolt was not rock 'n' roll. It was jazz.

These rebuttals of rock mythography are appealingly tart, even if Bayles sometimes exaggerates the views of her opponents. What's most disappointing, though, is that Bayles's own account of '50s music is hard to parse. Attempting to outflank mainstream rock critics on every front, she presents a range of apparently contradictory arguments. Fifties rock 'n' roll, Bayles informs us, was a dance craze without larger meaning; then she explains that it was a spiritual drama of hedonism and guilt played out among haunted Pentecostal singers; and finally she claims that it was a sexual release for white women who were able to climb off their pedestals and exercise their libidos in public.

By contrast, Bayles's account of '60 rock is easy enough to follow. Everywhere she sees a battle between the "negative sensibility" of the "new radicalism" and the affirmations of African American music, with the latter in retreat. The decline of the African American idiom takes many forms. The Beatles borrowed a "camp" sensibility from perverse modernism and expelled African American influences from their well-scrubbed song-making. Meanwhile the Kinks and the Animals "combined the selling points of blackness and Britishness" and

The Last Movie

Saturday, April 5. Welles's *Othello*:
black and white grid of rage,

steam of sheer fury spewing from the vent
of violence that followed where they went.

Wind howled on the battlements, but sun
gilded glum canals. The lovers floated

beneath black bridges, coupled in stone rooms.
The unrepentant villain (at the start

so all the rest was flashback)
dangled from a cage

squinting inscrutably at the funeral
procession winding through the town below.

The air was full of wailing.
Knives of sunlight glittered on the sea.

We lurched out onto Fifty-seventh Street.
You said, "I think I'm dying."

Next week your eyes went out.
Shining under the lamp,

your blue gaze, now opaque,
your face drawn sharper but still beautiful:

from this extremity you can attempt
to rise to rage and grief. Or you can yield

to the cozy quicksand of the bed.
You wave a hand at walls of books:

"What do I do? Do I throw all these away?"
Their anecdotes, their comforts—now black glass.

RACHEL HADAS

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engaged in a "primitivist embrace" of the blues. This embrace only defiled its object. Obsessed with rumors of black sexual potency, young whites exaggerated the raunchy and guitar-based parts of the Chicago blues, and introduced a brazen contempt for the audience derived from perverse modernism. Muddy Waters's teasing gave way to Mick Jagger's leering. Here and there some good music came out of this messy exchange; but the final results were disastrous. An aesthetic of "energy ... released" replaced one of "energy ... harnessed"; "masturbatory fantasy" drove out human "communication"; and "athletically aggressive instrumentalism" substituted for expressive singing.

Bayles is right that the racial dynamics of "classic rock" can be unattractive. I would not especially wish to defend the Rolling Stones' "Brown Sugar" and its easing conflation of sexual conquest and the slave trade. But even as Bayles writes in praise of openness, borrowing and syncretism, the cultural traffic that she allows turns out to be rather limited. George Clinton, Barry White and other black musicians who display too much irony or sexuality are rebuked for their betrayals of the blues aesthetic. This stance leads to some interesting omissions. In a chapter on the sexual excesses of '70s soul she simply ignores Al Green's great pre-gospel records. These records don't fit her thesis: while they exude a kind of "smooth-talking" sexuality, they can hardly be said to "drown in the ooze" of eroticism. Two of Green's signature songs, after all, were "Let's Get Married" and "Let's Stay Together."

Ultimately, Bayles is less concerned with music than with the social afflictions of American life, and with the roots of those afflictions in the counterculture and "perverse modernism." But the counterculture, for all its sins, was not the direct descendent of perverse modernism. It was fabricated out of an indiscriminate array of influences, from imported religions to an old-fashioned American hostility to authority. Its dominant tone was one of sunny optimism, not sullen irony. Duchamp and Marinetti were never exactly the movement's guiding lights. And Bayles hastily overstates the influence of the counterculture itself. In retrospect the summer of Love was more of a passing media sensation than a tectonic shift in American values. It certainly did little damage to the abiding middle-class concern with security and upward mobility. As in so much neoconservative writing, the twentieth century is flattened into a struggle between the "adversary culture" and the "civility, decency and morality" of the middle class (here in strange alliance with the blues). Culture is conflated with society, and both are polarized into friend and foe.

Still, Bayles doesn't hate "classic rock." She calls herself a "dues-paying member of the 1960s generation," and her chapters on '60s music combine nostalgia with regret. Scolding the Stones and other bands for their racial posturing, she still finds well-carpentered and joyful sounds—Sly and the Family Stone, even Country Joe and the Fish—to look back on with pleasure. It is only with the rise of punk rock and MTV that American music lapses into its routinized decadence. The reason she gives is perverse modernism, and its saturation of the record stores. But what is this rough beast? Perverse modernism, in her view, covers the counterculture and it covers the Velvet Underground's grim dissent from the counterculture; it covers the grandiose theatricality of arena rock shows and it covers the succinct gestures of minimalist punk bands. The contents of the category slide about behind the reader's back.

Take the Velvet Underground. As one of the first self-consciously avant-garde rock bands, the group that introduced the "happening" into rock 'n' roll, the Velvet Underground stand at the juncture of European decadence and American entertainment. The early Velvets, we're told, stripped the 4/4 rock beat of its swing inflections, adapted a sinister drone from minimalist composers and explored the decadent glamour of the demimonde in their arch and frigid songs. Therefore you'd expect them to play a suspect role in Bayles's book, and indeed they do: "Popular music had met and married perverse modernism," she writes sarcastically, "and for many observers, it was a great leap forward for rock."

Once she identifies this band as the advance guard of perverse modernism, however, Bayles reverses direction. Returning to the Velvets later on, she writes that "Heroin," their most notorious and striking early song, "incorporates noise into music—the strategy, as we've seen, of both extroverted modernism and the blues." On one page, then, the Velvet Underground are agents of nihilism and on another they call to mind an affirmational engagement with the flux of the world. The boundary between perverse modernism and extroverted modernism just won't sit still, which is not surprising, since it's an arbitrary construct in the first place. Moreover, if the Velvets were extroverted modernists, then so are any number of other bands that have successfully incorporated "noise into music"—say, Pere Ubu or Sonic Youth. Bayles has no interest in these groups and their tumultuous and often artful collages of sound. They are consigned indiscriminately to the dustbin of perverse modernism.

True to her belief in the vitality of African American music, Bayles has a measure of sympathy for rap, and she hopes that rap, together with a revitalized jazz, will help to shape an appealing music of the future. Maybe. But it's unlikely that such a music would satisfy Bayles's strictures. The purpose of her book, after all, is to argue that music ought to provide a commendable attitude toward life, and such attitudes are always hard to come by. More important, Bayles's demand for an uplifting popular music overshoots its subject. What Bayles can't acknowledge is that songs that are stupid or naïve, cloying or sentimental, nasty or cynical have a way of winning the ear's attention, and of reverberating afterwards in your feelings. ("I wish that for just one time / You could stand inside my shoes / You'd know what a drag it is to see you.") The promise of rock 'n' roll, you could say, is precisely to deliver intensifications of experience that are plainly inadequate, or partial, or absurd. And what of it?

For Bayles music is an attitude, a way of life, a means of struggle in adversity. But are pop songs operating manuals for life, and should they be? Music, after all, does many things, from harassing criminals to soothing shoppers, from exacerbating emotions to erasing them. At the proper distance a particular form—the blues, the symphony—might be seen to express a worldview. But that doesn't make music a way of life, any more than a painting or a sofa is a way of life. It's easier to remember melodies than it is to remember words; but it's also easier not to hear them at all.

Like the radical utopians of the '60s, Bayles wants popular music to sustain mankind and to affirm its higher values. (Where the radicals espoused rapture and bliss, Bayles recommends perseverance and sobriety.) When she hears a sound out there on the airwaves and likes it, or finds it moving, or interesting, she insists that sound mean something, and mean something worthwhile. It must soothe the mind, the body, the heart; it must be aesthetically complex and instinctually gratifying, and it must testify to some virtue of human conduct. Fortunately for all of us, though, musical pleasures rarely come in such tidy bundles. And the "beauty and meaning" of music can't always be transposed into life. •

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Teen Spirit

KURT COBAIN'S DEATH, THE NEWSpapers offered, was the "suicide that scarred a generation." A collective will to self-annihilation seemed to find its grisly embodiment in the corpse of a 27-year-old rock star. As in the days of young Werther, an epidemic of self-murder seemed about to break out. *The Washington Post* helpfully printed the numbers of local suicide hotlines.

BUT COBAIN WASN'T ANY SORT OF generational spokesman, and it's unlikely that his example will inspire anyone to extinguish himself. Cobain's problems with heroin, matrimony and stomach pain were severe; but they were hardly peculiar to his age group. And as for the most visible turmoil—his struggle with money and fame—well, that's not something that many of us have to worry about. Few of Cobain's fans can hope for a daytime candlelight vigil or a grieving widow named Courtney Love. Few of them can expect that their rambling suicide notes will be broadcast on MTV.

STILL, COBAIN'S DEATH WAS A depressing event, at least to his admirers. That's partly because Cobain was one rock star, maybe the only one around, whose celebrity appeared to be utterly without calculation. No one expected Nirvana's second album to sell almost 10 million copies. And when it did, Cobain, who was reared on the anti-commercial slogans of punk rock, didn't know how to exploit the media, even though the media knew perfectly well how to exploit him. When the press wrote about his drug use, or his domestic problems, he typically responded with spasms of self-contradictory anger. He admitted to using drugs, but he lashed out at journalists who reported that he used drugs. On his final album he raged at "self-appointed judges" in the press who, he fantasized, would "leave a blanket of ash on the ground." This wasn't a very pleasant spectacle. But it was worlds apart from the stylized antics and bad-boy petulances of an Axl Rose or Mötley Crüe. Success, undesired in the first place, brought Cobain little joy. In a culture overcome with celebrities, this was almost an edifying lesson.

THE REAL LOSS IN COBAIN'S SUIcide, though, is a musical one. Nirvana is famed and reviled for its introduction of "grunge rock" into the mainstream. After the success of its song "Smells Like Teen Spirit" in late 1991, a host of sludgy, punk-speckled hard rock bands from Seattle had hit records. There was Pearl Jam, and there was Alice in Chains, and there was Soundgarden (whose latest album, driven by a ponderous retread of the Guess Who's "American Woman," is currently No. 1 on the charts). And there was a wave of grunge lite, consisting of Stone Temple Pilots and a quintet known as Ugly Kid Joe, whose greatest accomplishment was to cover Harry Chapin's "Cats in the Cradle." Most of these faintly disaffected bands wore goatees and plaid, and appeared regularly on MTV. Their songs and videos were tabloid statements about drug addiction, child abuse and violence in the classroom. And they became handy symbols for the supposed plight of the young white male. "Grunge is what happens when children of divorce get their hands on guitars," *Newsweek* darkly concluded.

ACTUALLY, NIRVANA HAD LITTLE to do with all this. Cobain's music was both more melodic and more abrasive than the grunge norm. He usually eschewed the therapeutic vignettes of the "recovery rock" bands, and vented his spleen directly at the audience: "Teenage angst has paid off well / Now I'm bored and old." And while his fellow Seattleites reaped the glossy accoutrements of success, Cobain's heart lay elsewhere. He pressured his record company into reissuing the neglected records of an all-female British punk band called the Raincoats. (Receiving a letter from one of the Raincoats, he wrote, "made me happier than playing in front of thousands of people each night, rock-god idolization from fans, music industry plankton kissing my ass and the million dollars I made last year.") He recorded two lovely songs by the Vaselines, an enigmatic couple from Edinburgh. And he made certain that the production of his last album, *In Utero*, was so dry and echoless that his record company refused to release it without a few remixes. (MTV seemed especially pleased when Cobain re-recorded one of the songs with a cello.) Nirvana's real achievement was to suggest that a band from the rock "underground" of independent record labels, fanzines and small clubs could acquire renown without abandoning its music or its independent impulses. In this respect, Nirvana's success was of no cultural significance whatsoever; for no other band has done the same.

FORGET FOR A MOMENT THE aura of authenticity; punk rock is less about rage and confusion than it is about representing rage and confusion. And it was here that Cobain was especially talented. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" wasn't a big hit because of its marketing campaign or its catchy title or its video, which featured a squad of entranced cheerleaders who sprout tattoos and anarchy symbols in a crowded gym. It was a hit because Cobain knew how to make a few chords collide and lilt together. And because he knew how to modulate his voice to suggest a couple of feelings, from resignation to defiance to indolent perplexity. Where Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder bellows from the chest, chronically overemoting his songs, Cobain sang from his prickly throat. He knew when to scream, when to mumble, when to sound jaded and tired, when just to sound hoarse. The result was a definite uncertainty about the self—am I a "mosquito" or a "libido" he wondered. Sure, the range of emotion wasn't that wide—there was wry angst straight angst, excessive angst; his most famous words were "well, whatever, never mind." But he made each gesture count, and didn't torture any of them.

IT WAS INEVITABE THAT SOME PEOple bestowed a lot of meaning on all of this. In Cobain's observation that "everything's my fault," they heard the credo of a sullen, deindustrialized teenaged proletariat. But alienation, or irony, or even miserable self-pity, are universal experiences, and they are also acutely personal experiences. Cobain's fatigued, self-lacerating snarl may have reached a large audience; but even his closest fans didn't know exactly where it came from or what it meant. They struggled to decipher his lyrics and when they didn't like the results, struggled to render them opaque again. That kind of work can keep you busy for a long time. Was that a confession or a cough?

ALEXANDER STA

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Victim History

In *Lenin's Tomb*, David Remnick describes how, as the power of the Communist regime waned, people hurried to uncover the truth about events they believed had been misrepresented by the government or suppressed altogether (New York: Random House, 1993). As a result, the real stories about the previous 40 years came to light—the names and numbers of people murdered in Stalin's purges, the economic and human costs of collectivization and industrialization, the casualties of Chernobyl.... Citizens were finally able to see the shape of their nation's history.

American history is, in part, the story of victims and victimization, but this is not the principal theme.

Only people ruled by totalitarian regimes have their history completely hidden by lies and propaganda so that, when a regime falls, they must rediscover their past. But all histories are flawed. Historians leave some things out and place too much importance on others; we are all creatures of our time. In democratic countries, scholars and ordinary citizens constantly revisit their history in order to correct these omissions and distortions and get a truer and more comprehensive picture of their past. The current efforts to write a "multicultural" American history to replace the great-(white)-man type of American history that we inherited are part of this democratic tradition.

The trouble is, some multicultural historians are not setting the record straight, as Lawrence Fuchs, a professor of American Studies at Brandeis University, points out in *The American Kaleidoscope* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1990). In place of the one-sided picture of American history as an epic of democracy in which right inevitably triumphed, they present an equally one-sided story of a nation whose history always ran counter to its ideals. These multicultural historians, says Fuchs, view U.S. history as a saga of victims and victimization. They present U.S. history primarily in terms of how a white majority wronged minorities and thus encourage young Americans to view their country, and one another, with distrust and contempt.

No one would deny that American history is, in part, the story of victims and victimization. This is an important theme, and in the past it was neglected in our schools. But, as Fuchs says, it is not the principal theme. And victimizing individuals or groups is not unique to the history of the U.S. What is unique in our history is the legal structure that has given people who are wronged a way of seeking their rights:

> The Declaration of Independence and a system of laws based on the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution...[have] made it possible for individuals from all groups to battle prejudice and unjust laws with an amazing measure of success.

Insisting that minorities were merely victims—the passive sufferers of injustice—also distorts the role of minorities, and especially nonwhites, in our history. People like Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King were central players in the effort to make the U.S. live up to its ideals. They protested the hypocrisy of a government that promised rights to all but denied them to people of color. Indeed, as Fuchs points out, they *refused* to be victims and in doing so secured for members of their group their rights as equal citizens.

Fuchs's alternative to the victim-victimizer version of U.S. history is what he calls "civic-centered history." Its focus is on the ideals, institutions and experiences that Americans share rather than the group differences that separate us—on themes that reflect, as Fuchs says, the *unum* rather than the *pluribus*.

What are some of these themes? One is the development of religious freedom—the "remarkable...American invention of separation of church and state and the evolution of protection given to religious liberty." Another is the long and continuing fight of African-Americans to obtain their rights. A third theme—and one that includes most of the other themes—is the effort to establish individual, rather than group, rights.

In many other countries, minority groups are given special privileges. For example, they may be allocated special jobs in government agencies that only people from their group can fill. Our ideal has always been to base this kind of thing on individual merit rather than membership in a group. A civic-centered history would show how members of groups here have struggled—sometimes successfully and sometimes not—to get their rights as individuals and be judged on their merit rather than on the fact that they are Asian or Catholic or female—or white.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1994 by Albert Shanker.

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